CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

The Beaver

APRIL | MAY 2003 $5.95

The Transit of Venus

Stargazing in 1769

The Cold War & Kurt Meyer

Vancouver's Forgotten Mayor

A Line in the Water:

Northwest Angle squabble

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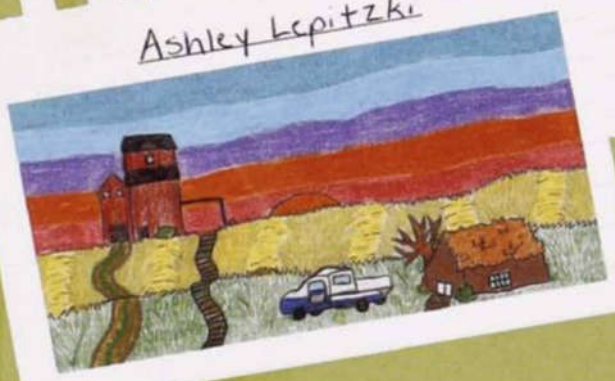

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The Beaver

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Letters

The *Beaver* welcomes readers' comments. E-mail us at <editors@historysociety.ca> or write to *The Beaver*, 478–167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0T6 Canada. Please include your address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

Tannenbaum redux

In June 1976 the Canadian Historical Association held its annual meeting at Laval University in Quebec. At that time, I was chairman of the military history group of the CHA. We had arranged to have a mess dinner for our members in the officers' mess of the Royal Twenty-second Regiment, located in the old Citadel. We invited a German couple visiting Quebec, the Baron and Baroness zu Eisenbach, to dine with us. Apparently, 200 years before, on June 1, the day of our dinner, their ancestor Major-General Baron Riedesel had landed in Quebec with his troops to help the British in their fight against the American rebels ["O Tannenbaum," December 2002 / January 2003]. I found out that, during the war, Baron zu Eisenbach had been a Luftwaffe pilot. To cheer him up, our group sang "Lili Marlene"!

In December he sent me a Christmas card (see above). On it is the reproduction of a painting of the Reidesel family in 1781 in front of the tree mentioned in your article.

Dr. R.H. Roy
Victoria, British Columbia

First breath

The date of December 1, 1969, to mark the first use of the Breathalyzer to determine a driver's blood alcohol concentration is not completely accurate ["Currents," December 2002 / January 2003]. That date is the first time the Breathalyzer could be used under the Criminal Code, which required a driver to provide a breath sample or be charged with failing to provide a sample.

The Breathalyzer was, however, used prior to 1969, but voluntarily by consent of the driver. In Ontario the first Breathalyzer was used by the Whitby OPP in June 1956 followed by the City of Toronto Police in July 1956.

Jim Wigmore, Forensic Toxicologist
Centre of Forensic Sciences
Toronto, Ontario

Erratum

In the map on p. 10 of the February/March 2003 issue, which accompanied the article "Back to Back," Fort Providence was shown at its current location at the west arm of Great Slave Lake. However, at the time of George Back's explorations, Fort Providence was located on the north shore, just southeast of present-day Yellowknife. The *Beaver* regrets the error.

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Leave it to *Beaver* readers: Your survey responses are in

"When do we see results of the survey?" asked one reader who responded to our recent readership survey, mailed to 5,000 subscribers with the October/November 2002 issue. More than 1,100 of you responded to our questions about the magazine.

Our Typical Reader PRA Inc. of Winnipeg, the market research firm that compiled the study, provided us with a snapshot of the typical subscriber.* They told us you're a diverse bunch – from all age groups, regions, and educational backgrounds. But based on averages, a typical *Beaver* reader is over fifty and university educated. Most are married, with no children living at home, and financially comfortable. Avid readers, you consume on average twenty-two books a year. And you love to travel – 68 percent counted travel among your interests outside of history, taking three holidays in the last twelve months. You have many other interests – everything from wildlife and the environment to fine art. About two-thirds of you have access to the Internet, and that increases as your age decreases – 95 percent of readers under fifty have access.

Some readers objected to providing personal information, so didn't. But the reality of magazine economics requires advertising revenue. By providing our advertisers with a profile of readers, we ensure that the ads we run reflect your identified interests – you're more likely to see ads for new books and travel services than diapers and appliances.

As for the content of the magazine, you tell us you like what we are doing, with an average approval rating of 8.7 out of 10. About one quarter – most often younger subscribers – feel there are too few photos and illustrations. Men and women differ in their interests, though both like to read about explorers and native peoples. Men want to read about the fur trade, the military, and geography, while women are interested in women's history as well as personalities, culture, and anthropology. Cultural history and personalities are also of interest to younger readers, along with crime and scandal, art and photography, and science and invention.

A Positive Response As editors, we don't lose sight that this typical reader represents a collectivity. But most valuable are your views as individuals, with very individual expectations for the magazine. Some 400-odd respondents took the time to provide observations and suggestions. More than half told us how much they enjoyed the magazine:

"The magazine is fine; don't get all enthusiastic about change and ruin it."

"Do not change – you have a nice balance of interesting subjects."

"The only magazine I read cover to cover. I look forward to every issue."

"I don't know where else I'd learn about many of the people in your articles. I should have paid more attention in history class!"

"Sorry to be so positive, but I have found the *Beaver* simply the best Canadian magazine ... but too few people are aware of it."

"I always thought the *Beaver* was an intellectual magazine. My mistake. Very easy to read, down to earth, eye opening. You make Canadian history live."

"Continue to search out the offbeat, seldom-reported episodes of our history."

Readers Have Their Say Many had specific things they liked about the magazine, while others had definite dislikes:

"I enjoy the letters and book reviews."

"Too much space devoted to book reviews."

"Well written in good English."

"I feel frequently that I'm reading a textbook – I often find the articles too intense and too long."

"Thank you for making history accessible to all."

"Writers should expect readers to rise to their level and not write at a lower level."

"Too often your writers write articles of the most literal nature, superficial, dressed only in a cheap nationalism. ... I would like to see a deeper intellectual engagement and higher standard of writing."

"The maps are always good."

"More, better maps needed."

"The format change is a great improvement to the magazine."

"I prefer the previous style."

"I first encountered the *Beaver* as an apologist for the Bay – much better now as an historical magazine."

"I enjoyed the articles related to the fur trade and northern Canada – the change in focus does not appeal to me."

"The fur trade and Louis Riel get too much space."

"I just love the 'Currents' section. It's the best combination of fascinating fact and humour to be found in any magazine."

"If I have any quibble, it is with the 'Currents' section. The information is great – the writing style is not in keeping with the rest of the publication."

"Great magazine: Keep up the balance and fairness; be vigilant against special interest groups with an axe to grind."

"You have a habit of bowing to political correctness – this is deplorable."

"Too many self-righteous feminist and socialist articles."

"Care should be taken to leave historical reporting gender neutral."

"Re: October issue. There are no features on women, so I won't read it. I want 52 percent of the features on women."

"Stories about war don't interest me."

"More military history."

"No articles on politics."

"More political history."

... and We're Listening As to the many topics you want us to cover, here's a partial list:

> Acadians; Canadian art; agriculture; aviation pioneers; biographies of the great and ordinary; Canadian publishing and literature; culture – theatre and artists; the decorative arts; early exploration; ethnic groups; First Nations; French colonial period; genealogy; HBC and Northwest Company; immigration; Korean War; museum collections; place names; philately; railways; historical Canadian recipes; regional stories; religion; sailing and ships; towns and roads.

Many of you suggested that we start a magazine for younger readers, and we're pleased to tell you that market research for a "junior" publication has begun.

What does it all add up to? Well, as one reader commented, "Thank you for considering your readers when creating the magazine." As you can see, you've given us plenty to consider. Thank you all.

Winners of the draw for those who completed the survey are: Paul Shilton (grand prize winner of video series, *Canada: A People's History*); Jan Booker, Pat McMurtry, Jim Powell, William Whitton, J.P. Lefebvre, Peter Addison, Douglas Cameron, Mavis Brodie, B.D. Earle, A. Neil Taylor (winners of book sets of *Canada: A People's History*).

*We're grateful to the Winnipeg Foundation, whose financial assistance made the survey possible.

A bridge too far-gone

And in our continuing Perils of Built Heritage series, we direct your attention to the highest masonry pier in Ontario – the David Street Bridge, which spans the dramatic Elora Gorge in picturesque Elora, Ontario. Yes, it's over eighty years old, and it's in poor condition. And something must be done, lest there be a mishap. But what? Some drudges suggested demolishing the current version, with its graceful limestone arches, and replacing it with a standard single-span steel highway bridge. But many in the community, mindful of the landmark bridge's charm and tourist-pull, have said, no way, José. Well, they've got a point. Look at the picture. It's a beauty. Who couldn't love a bridge like that? Anyway, the plan is to construct a concrete duplicate of the 1922 bridge, albeit wider for today's traffic, which would see the pier restored and preserved. The trouble is, it costs about $1 million extra – curiously, about the value of the recently auctioned 1911 Canadian silver coin (see Coin of the realm, this page). Where will that $1 million come from? Fundraising, of course! And here's the website: <www.elora heritage.com> for further information.

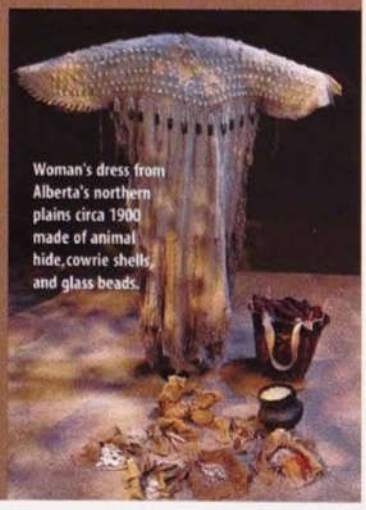
ELORA INFORMATION CENTRE

Comic Rielief

Well, you can't say Louis Riel isn't a protean figure. Which may be why the nineteenth-century politician, mystic, and maverick has inspired twentieth-century poems, novels, opera, film and – for all we know – needlepoint samplers. Lately, here in the twenty-first century, it's comic books: Toronto illustrator Chester Brown began drawing and writing his series *Louis Riel* in 1999. This spring, ten issues later, he's done. The hero of the tale has posed in uncountable panels and stood beneath innumerable word balloons, moving from leading role in the provisional government at Red River in 1869 to doom on a Regina gibbet in 1885. While comic books bespeak the lightweight and the easy-to-read, Brown's series – which is scheduled for collection in one volume in September – maintains a thoughtful, mature sensibility and a respect for historicity, though he does

The first shall be … first

This just opened: The First Peoples Hall at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, in Gatineau, Quebec. It's big – with 2,000 artifacts spread over 2,000 square metres, it's the largest permanent exhibition on Canada's aboriginal peoples in the country. And it's a big deal – more than ten years have gone into the making, and many hurdles have had to be overcome, fraught as the subject of Canada's aboriginal cultures is with concerns over voice and ownership. The result – a half-kilometre-long walk from welcoming message to final display – is there for all, with native history and culture from sea to sea to sea, precontact and postcontact included. The hall is divided into zones that are at once chronological and thematic, beginning with the origins, which include both creation stories and evidence from archaeological digs in such areas as northern Yukon and coastal Nova Scotia. Another zone depicts aboriginal relationship with the land, demonstrating, for instance, the technological accomplishments of Arctic whalers and the communal methods of Plains natives hunting bison. The zone, appropriately called "Shock Wave" for the effect of European contact, explores the complexities of colonization, from the initial equitable relationships to the growing disparity. The exhibit ends with displays of the current renaissance in First Nations' culture. Of course, there's lots of audio-visual spread through three theatres, so you don't poop out walking that half-kilometre. Sounds like a must-see to us.



Woman's dress from Alberta's northern plains circa 1900 made of animal hide, cowrie shells, and glass beads.

Coin of the realm

Whew! It could have left the country, but it didn't. *It* is a rare Canadian coin, a 1911 silver dollar – once considered the most valuable in the world by the Guinness Book of World Records – that was put up for auction in New York recently by its owners, a Toronto couple with a 700-piece coin collection. Fortunately, a Calgarian bought it – for 690,000 American dollars, which puts us into seven figures, Canadian dollar-wise. The reason the coin, once dubbed "the emperor of Canadian coins," is so valuable is because only two of them were struck. They were to be part of sets that also included gold coins worth $2.50, $5, $10, and $20, but the federal government changed its mind and struck only gold $5 and $10 coins. Nothing came of the other coinage. One of the two silver dollars, each of which depicts King George V, resides in the Bank of Canada Currency Museum in Ottawa. Now the other resides in Calgary. Somewhere. Out of sight. But, at least for the time being, not out of mind.

make a point of saying that he believes the Métis cause was just and the Canadian government of the day was wrong. To further dispel any notion this is history lite,

each twenty-four-page volume contains end notes and a bibliography of respected sources. You could almost use it to cram for an exam.

Copies are available through the publishers, Drawn and Quarterly, P.O. Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 4S8. Or log on to <www.drawnand quarterly.com> for more information.

People and cows

Since there are few people around these days who lived through the year 1906, there are few left to burn with shame over the contents of the 1906 census. Presuming there was anything shameful about it. Still, overcoming concerns about privacy issues, is, in essence, why the contents of the census – a special one surveying the "Northwest Provinces" (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta) – have finally been released after years of to-ing and fro-ing and pushing and pulling between researchers and writers who like to root out stuff and politicians and bureaucrats who would rather they didn't. The survey was taken a year after Saskatchewan and Alberta became provinces, when immigrants were flooding into western Canada at such a rate that the tally of the routine 1901 census was rendered obsolete. As such, its contents help paint a richer portrait of a unique time and place. The index, at <www.archives.ca/02/020153_e.html>, isn't searchable by family name – sorry! – but with some diligence you can wend your way through province, district, and subdistrict to find your folks. And their livestock.

Take the day off

April 16: To note Toronto Locomotive Works building the first locomotive in Canada in 1853. Do the locomotion.

April 29: To commemorate the centenary of the Frank Slide, the sudden collapse of the eastern slope of Turtle Mountain in Crowsnest Pass, which dropped 74 millions tonnes of rock and killed eighty people. Consider the capriciousness of life.

May 21: To celebrate Chief Justice of Lower Canada William Osgoode's declaration two hundred years ago that slavery was inconsistent with British law. Shout hallelujah.

May 24: To mark the graduation at McGill University in 1833 of William Loggie, the first medical student to graduate in Canada. Complain about your lumbago.

Bibliofiles for bibliophiles

Fond of fur? Trade, that is. Can't get enough of the Company of Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay or the Nor'Westers or Alexander Mackenzie or David Thompson or George Simpson or Fort William or Fort Garry or Rocky Mountain House? Think you've read it all? Well, you haven't. Trust us. At <www.members.shaw.ca/gearens/HistandClass/bibliofur.htm>, University of Alberta professor Gerhard Ens has compiled the fur-trade bibliography of fur-trade bibliographies – the equivalent of twenty-six printout pages listing what seems like every diary, book, and article, every primary and secondary source, that has some link to the great sweep of history centred around trapping and trading North American rodents to warm European heads. If you think you've missed something bibliolicious, you'll probably find it here.

Epigrammatic website of the month

"It is better to be sincere in one language than to be a twit in two," said John Crosbie pithily, speaking in 1983 about his own monolingualism and Pierre Trudeau's bilingualism. We laughed like a drain and went searching **<www.canquotes.com/index.html>**, a highly entertaining searchable database called – surprise! – CanQuotes, for Trudeau's witty rejoinder. Alas, he either wasn't in the room that day or he had other fish to fry. Still, the fifteenth prime minister had his quotable moments besides the familiar "Just watch me" and "fuddle duddle." To a passel of premiers in a tizzy over federal intrusions in 1981, he said witheringly: "Canada is seen to some as a confederation of shopping centres."

Don't we have big fun here at the *Beaver* searching databases for Canadian *bons mots*? Well, you can too. CanQuotes has 10,000 of them, with another 5,000 expected to come online shortly along with a French version. All you have to do is type a word into the search doodah, and – *badoinggg!* – you have something you can use to amuse and amaze at cocktail parties. For instance – something about the milieu we work in made us type the word *beaver*. Here's UBC English professor Roy Daniells on the subject in 1963: "Yet the beaver, in spite of his smile, is hardly adequate. He chops down trees, he builds dams, he prepares for the winter. But his destiny has been to be skinned by foreign interests." Still true. Or humorist Will Ferguson, after we keyed in *Canadian history*: "The great themes of Canadian history are as follows: Keeping the Americans out, keeping the French in, and trying to get the Natives to somehow disappear." Needing relief from such bluntness, we typed in good old reliable *sex* and got Eric Nicol: "The reason Canadian history has never caught on, like sex, for instance, is that it has been hard up for royal mistresses and has suffered from domination by common sense, compromise and a callous favouring of the facts over the juicy bits." Of course, we believe Canadian history *is* catching on. And you may quote us on that.

Champlain's Legacy

Four hundred years ago this May, arriving at Tadoussac, at the mouth of the Saguenay River, thirtysomething cartographer and mariner Samuel de Champlain explored his options for a second career. Pensioned for his military service to the French king Henri IV and author of an illustrated manuscript on the West Indies, he sought to capitalize on his extensive knowledge of the New World. Poised to explore the great river of Canada beyond its narrowing, which the Montagnais called "Kebec," Champlain reflected on "the feasibility of discovering the passage to China, without the inconveniences of the ice of the north or the heats of the torrid zone," as he wrote in his *Voyages*, published in 1613. In the more "civilized" interior, a passage to the east would be found; there, Champlain would transform his social status from navigator and mapmaker to founder and governor of a new country.

His explorations over the summer of 1603 as far as the Lachine Rapids generated a good sense of the geography of the St. Lawrence basin, with the first intimations of Niagara Falls and of water routes to Hudson Bay. Champlain also observed the wide array of Amerindian nations, including Montagnais, Algonquians, and the "bons Irocois," or Hurons. By accident – or more probably by design – he began to build alliances with them. My interest in this iconic figure in the history of New France revolves around these early days of charting new territory and engaging newly encountered peoples. What Columbus and Cortes were in sixteenth-century Spanish expansion, Champlain was in seventeenth-century French: each, venturing into what for them was the unknown, improvised relations and engaged in prodigious acts of naming in this New World. But even though history celebrates him as Father of New France, Champlain's qualities as alliance-maker and ethnographer have not been fully investigated. Like the early Iberian colonizers, Champlain had a capacity to improvise a vision and to communicate with the peoples of the new land, which throws great relief onto early colonization and emerging European-Amerindian relations.

For Champlain, landscape – however awesome – was secondary to people, and he proved a master of what we would call intercultural dialogue.

Though the outline of Champlain's career is well known, reconstructing his outlook requires some detective work. Born between 1567 and 1570 in the coastal town of Brouage, to a fishing family whose head, Antoine de Champlain, served as a sea captain, Samuel de Champlain served the *politique* middle ground during France's wars of religion. His travels in the Caribbean and Mexico (1599–1603), about which he produced maps and an illustrated account, taught him ways to effectively represent knowledge of the New World to an audience back home. Curious to explore the French claims to America, and convinced that a passage to the east could be found following Cartier's great river into the heart of the continent, Champlain sailed to New France in 1603, the first of six sojourns in Canada, the last in 1619. These included a lengthy stint at Port-Royal in Acadia as well as the 1608 founding of Quebec. By 1613, he had travelled deep into the Great Lakes region and cultivated enduring ties with the Wendat (Huron) and Algonquin peoples whose military and commercial circle the French joined.

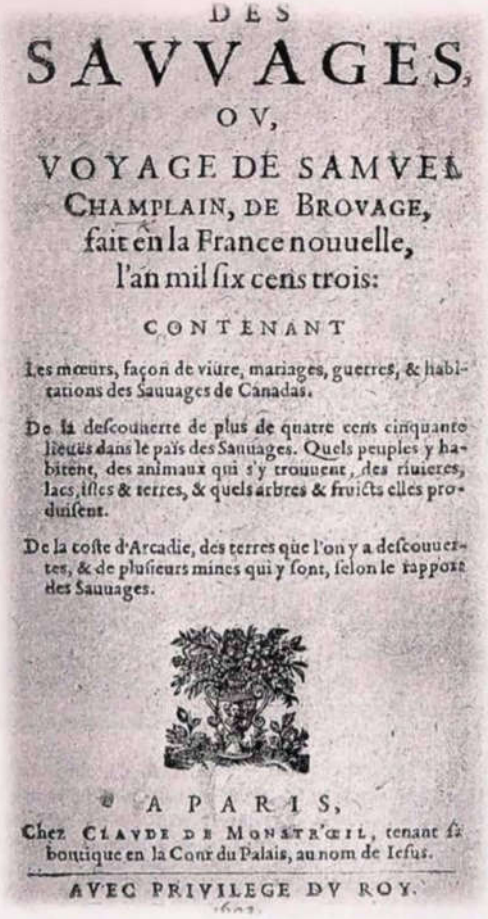
Just as Columbus was slow to realize that his "Indies" were a new world to Europeans, so too did Champlain only reluctantly give up the goal of discovering a route to Asia through North America. The idea persists into his second volume of *Voyages*, published in 1619, and in the wishful name "Lachine" for the rapids that marked the supposed route to the Southern Sea. Unlike Columbus, though, he quickly grasped the dynamic of the new land, and saw clearly that alliances with Amerindians for trade and defence were the key to French designs in Canada. For Champlain, landscape, however awesome, was secondary to people, and he proved a master of what we would call intercultural dialogue. His travels gave him the eyewitness authority to propound the new colony: he had "gone to the place," as he asserted in 1603, and could speak confidently of the potential of New France. More importantly, his steady interest in the possibilities of alliance with

Opinions expressed in Explorations are the author's own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the *Beaver*.

Algonquian and Iroquoian peoples gradually led to an east-west network, with connections to the far north, prefiguring a country whose formal recognition was centuries away, but whose living fabric was taking shape.

The book that resulted from Champlain's 1603 explorations, *Des Sauvages*, appeared in December of that year. A point-to-point description of his voyage, it contained insightful portraits of a number of Amerindian peoples as well as a sketch of the great interior of the continent based on interviews with their traders whose networks extended north and west. While the term *sauvage* is highly pejorative today, for Champlain and the French in the early seventeenth, the term, as a noun, was neutral, and could even have positive connotations. It referred to peoples at an earlier stage of development, whose forest lives and nomadism both isolated and protected them from the influences of civilization. For Champlain, the *sauvage* simply lived in an underdeveloped state that a French colony would bring to civilized standards.

A recent biography of Champlain suggests that he was a zealous Christian whose interest in converting the Amerindians was a high priority. Yet was missionary Christianity at the heart of his approach? I doubt this: Champlain himself came from the religious middle ground of France, which distrusted religious enthusiasm. In Champlain's ideal colony, religion contributed to order alongside commerce, agriculture, and good government. He suggests that Amerindians could speedily be made Christians if they were colonized – something that "most of them would like." As revealed in his discussions with various native people, Champlain's Christianity was inclusive, one that optimistically assumed that all people, even the nomadic tribes of the great northern forests, have some sense of God, however deceived by ignorance and by the devil they might be. For the benefit of the Indians, Champlain related a basic Catholic understanding of Christianity, emphasizing the intercession of the saints, on


DES
SAVVAGES,
OV,
VOYAGE DE SAMVEL
CHAMPLAIN, DE BROVAGE,
fait en la France nouuelle,
l'an mil ſix cens trois:
CONTENANT
Les mœurs, façon de viure, mariages, guerres, & habitations des Sauuages de Canadas.
De la deſcouuerte de plus de quatre cens cinquante lieuës dans le païs des Sauuages. Quels peuples y habitent, des animaux qui s'y trouuent, des riuieres, lacs, iſles & terres, & quels arbres & fruicts elles produiſent.
De la coſte d'Arcadie, des terres que l'on y a deſcouuertes, & de pluſieurs mines qui y ſont, ſelon le rapport des Sauuages.
A PARIS,
Chez CLAVDE DE MONSTR'ŒIL, tenant ſa boutique en la Cour du Palais, au nom de Ieſus.
AVEC PRIVILEGE DV ROY.
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which, he claimed, "all Christians agree," detailing a religion useful mainly as a protection against the snares and temptations of the devil. Thus the Indians could benefit from Christianity as much as anyone could. Champlain did not report many instructive encounters in which the benefits of Christianization were laid out systematically. Instead, he presented religion as a series of ritual assertions, as in "this is what we do, and you would do well to do it too." As a result, Champlain soft-peddled the idea of New France as a New Jerusalem, although he would invite both Récollet (Franciscan) and Jesuit missionaries. Most importantly, he largely refrained from the wholesale denunciation of Amerindian cultures that sometimes figured in later missionary reports and fed the condescension that came to dominate French views of the *sauvages* in the seventeenth century. Instead, as his 1603 writing suggests, Champlain viewed the Algonquians and Iroquoians as peoples who would come to embrace the French colony largely out of self-interest and enlightenment, the reasoning of equals rather than of peoples who were truly deficient.

This approach to Amerindian relations, in which dignified exchange of an essentially political nature offset the more patronizing approach of the missionaries, was perhaps Champlain's most distinctive contribution to the new colony. In 1603, he did not conceive of the French effort succeeding without alliance; he understood that Canada was a land where groups worked together, even if for primarily defensive purposes. Three nations, he notes – Algonquins, Etchemins (later known as Malecites or Penobscots), and Montagnais – had together defeated the Iroquois at the mouth the Rivière des Iroquois (Richelieu River) that summer. Similar alliances would make future prosperity and security possible.

Champlain's ship coasted along the Baie des Chaleurs before returning to Tadoussac and to France at the end of the summer of 1603. *Des Sauvages* relates the curious story of Gougou, "un monstre espouvantable" [*sic*] who stalked native and newcomer alike in cannibalistic fury in the southern part of the bay. Champlain tells the reader that the Amerindians say such strange things about this Gougou that the phenomenon would be considered false if he were to report them. But because it terrified all the Amerindians, he believed there was support for the monster's reality. Europeans, too, had reported its sounds and disturbances. Champlain concludes by suggesting that this Gougou is just some "devil that torments them." Yet he trusted his interlocutors and listened to their stories, reluctant to debunk them. The voyage of 1603 produced a minor account of monsters, but a major account of a new land. What Champlain saw and heard, while initially supporting his belief in a passage to the Pacific, would come to be recognized as the routes, relationships, and exchanges that gave shape and form to the first Canada.

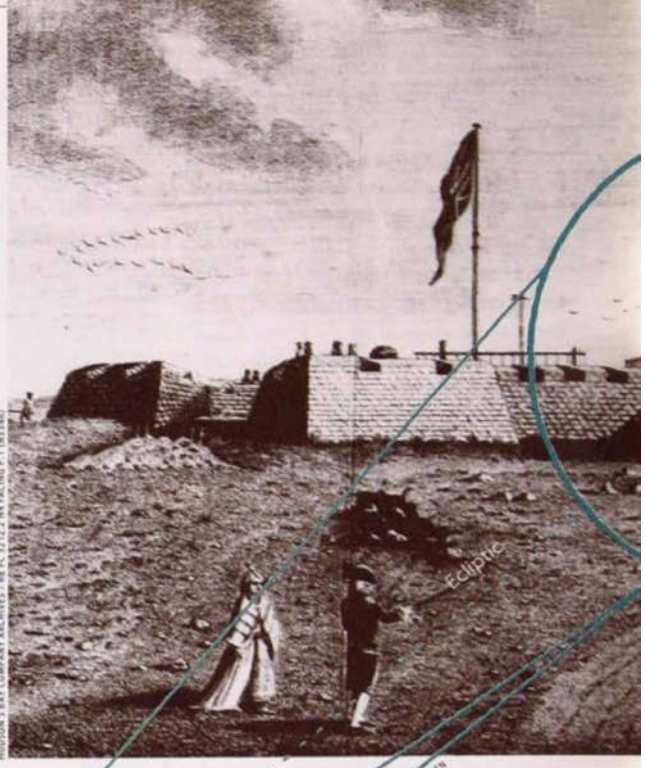
Peter Goddard is associate professor of history at the University of Guelph, where he specializes in the study of the early modern encounter of Europe and the New World.

The Transit of Venus

by Rita Griffin-Short

On August 10, 1768, amid hordes of voracious mosquitoes and sand flies, William Wales and Joseph Dymond disembarked the *Prince Rupert* after sixty-eight days at sea. They prepared to spend the next year at Prince of Wales Fort, the Hudson's Bay Company post at the Churchill River. They had left England not, as most travelling in that direction did, as emissaries of the fur trade; nor were they associated with the quest to seek the Northwest Passage. They were, instead, scientists, who had come to the treeless, inhospitable environment around Churchill for a single purpose: to observe the planet Venus.

They were not alone. While Wales and Dymond tarried near Hudson Bay, other British scientists were travelling to other parts of the globe for the same purpose – some, like Wales's brother-in-law, astronomer Charles Green, travelling with James Cook as far as Tahiti. So, too, were representative scientists of other European nations travelling around the world. It was the international scientific event of the century. On June 3, 1769, they would be witness to a rare phenomenon: Venus would pass between the Earth and the Sun, a transit that occurred twice within an eight-year period about every 120 years.[1] During the previous transits of Venus in 1631 and 1639, European societies were still coming to grips with the Copernican theory that placed the Sun, not the Earth, at the centre of the planetary system. By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, societies were in the full flush of the Enlightenment. Aided by technological advances in instrumentation, notably the telescope, astronomers made great strides toward understanding the mechanics and measurement of the universe. Despite this, one fundamental piece of astronomical knowledge remained elusive: the distance between the Earth and the Sun. Edmund Halley, the second Astronomer Royal, had noted and timed a transit of Mercury across the Sun on the island of St. Helena in 1677. He realized that transits could provide a new way to measure distances in the solar system. Though he was not the first to suggest the idea, he was the first to put forward a practical mathematical model. He presented it to the Royal Society in 1716, urging its members to begin thinking about organizing for the transits of Venus later in the century. Doing so, scientists believed, would solve the vexing problem of precise distance and complete the dimensions of Isaac Newton's elegant world system devised decades earlier.



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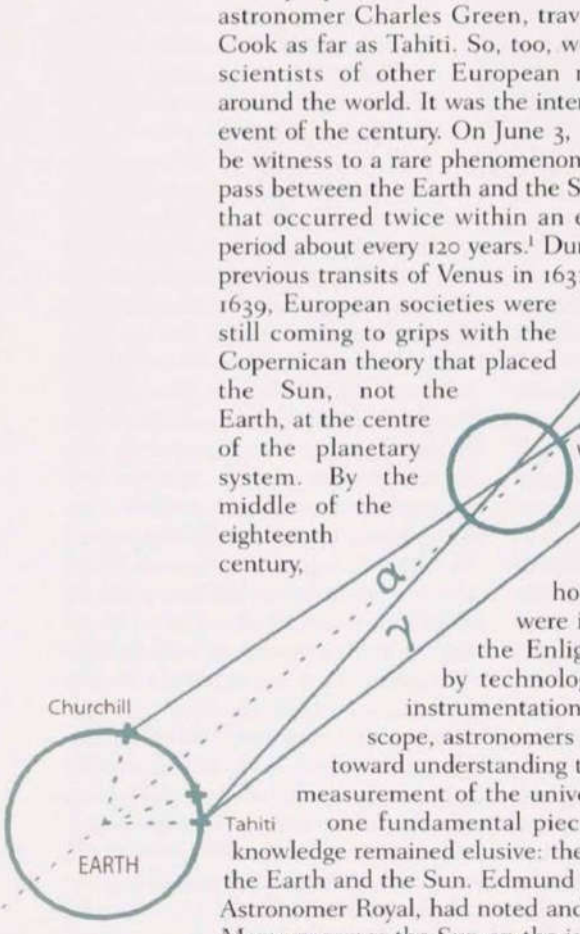
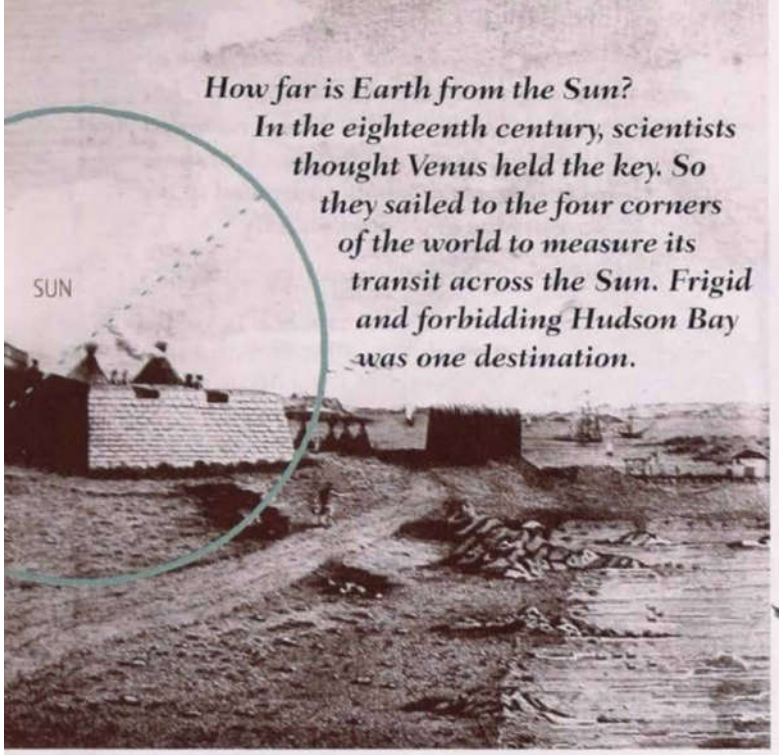
MARCEL VAN GALEN



Wales and Dymond had to wait several days for the *Prince Rupert* to be unloaded before they could begin to set up their laboratory, which looked like a large shower with a circular brass rod and brass rings to hold up a tent. Variously described as circular and octagonal, the prefabricated structure's vital feature was its rollers for a slotted roof, an ingenious design from which Wales and Dymond would make their astronomical observations. Their task, though it

[1] The next two transits of Venus will occur on June 8, 2004 and June 6, 2012.

How far is Earth from the Sun? In the eighteenth century, scientists thought Venus held the key. So they sailed to the four corners of the world to measure its transit across the Sun. Frigid and forbidding Hudson Bay was one destination.



Above: *A North West View of Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudsons Bay, North America* by Samuel Hearne, 1777. When Wales and Dymond sailed into Churchill in 1768, nine years before Hearne made this sketch, Prince of Wales Fort was still undergoing work, though the stone walls of the original ramparts, intended to protect the HBC post from attack by the French, had been completed in 1739. Though designed to be the most secure fortress in North America, the French took it easily in 1782.

Diagram, left: The apparent shift in the position of an object against the background, as seen from two locations, is called a parallax shift. To determine solar parallax in 1769, scientists planned to study the position of Venus against the background of the Sun. Widely separated locations whose distance from one another was known, such as Churchill and Tahiti, were chosen. By measuring the elapsed time between Venus's entry and exit, scientists could determine the degree of parallax. With the parallax known, the two sides of the triangle formed by two set points of observation and the object could be calculated. The key, however, lay in the precise timing of the length of Venus's transit; to be of any use, measurement had to be accurate to within a few seconds.

would be nearly ten months before they could effect it, was to time Venus as it crossed the face of the Sun. The intent was to determine solar parallax. Astronomical theory proposes that when Venus is viewed against the backdrop of the Sun simultaneously from widely separated locations on the Earth's surface (Churchill and Tahiti, for instance) and its transit duration timed, the elapsed time between Venus's entry and exit over the Sun can be expressed as a degree of angle using trigonometry.

While theoretically simple, determining celestial distance was less straightforward. Among the potential problems, the most crucial was the weather – a cloudy day would block out the event completely. The latitude of the observer had to be exact for comparative calculations, as did the timing of ingress and egress. The precision of the scientific instruments was also a concern. Optics, while much improved, were not yet perfect; nor were instruments that required ever smaller degrees of graduation. Telescopes had been in existence for a century and a half, but ones that combined sufficient power and portability were more recent. Astronomical clocks, whose regulated pendulums were needed to time the event

Instruments

To accomplish the task of recording the transit of Venus, William Wales and Joseph Dymond arrived at Prince of Wales Fort with the latest scientific instruments made by Britain's best instrument makers. They included:

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CANADA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM, OTTAWA

• two astronomical pendulum clocks by John Shelton and John Ellicott, the latter's with "an apparatus for correcting the effects of heat and cold." Shelton (1717–1777) made five longcase clocks like the one at left for the Royal Society to use for timing the transits of Venus in 1761 and 1769 from different parts of the globe; • two quadrants "of one foot radius" by John Bird and John Hadley, to measure the altitude of celestial bodies. They were similar to the octant, bottom, made by Benjamin Cole, Jr. (1727–1813) at his shop The Orrery on Fleet Street, London; • two reflecting telescopes of "two feet focus" by James Short, one with a Dolland double object-glass micrometer, similar to the one top left. Short (1710–1768), a professional optician, was one of the two outstanding telescope makers working in eighteenth-century England (the other was William Herschel). A heliometer like this one, left, made by John Dolland (1706–1761) was attached to the reflecting telescope to measure small angular distances between celestial objects; • an alarm clock; • a barometer; • two Fahrenheit thermometers designed to read well below freezing; • a variation compass; • two stoves with accoutrements plus one chaldron (thirty-six bushels) of coal; and • a prefabricated observatory (see page 11). ◘

William Wales

COURTESY RITA GRIFFIN-SHORT

Portrait of William Wales, by John Russell, 1794.

Born around 1734 in northern England and well trained in Newtonian mathematics, William Wales, the senior of the two astronomers at Prince of Wales Fort in 1768–1769, was an able and confident scientist and teacher who came to be widely admired by his peers and students.

The first scientist to winter in Hudson Bay, he presented to the Royal Society after his return to England a journal of his experiences with pertinent practical information about the severe climate and other details, which likely led to the Royal Society's subsequent request to the HBC for natural history specimens and to company servants keeping meteorological records. His career advanced through his 1772 voyage with James Cook to the Pacific, after which he was appointed master of navigation mathematics at the school established at Christ's Hospital, London, to train young men in navigation. He taught there until his death.

George Vancouver, midshipman-in-training on Cook's *Resolution* in 1772, wrote that he "was privileged to receive instruction under him." Charles Lamb remembers Wales at Christ's Hospital School as having "a constant glee about him ... heightened by a ... North-Country dialect." Lamb's contemporary at the school, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, used Wales as the model for his poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Explorer Samuel Hearne, who met Wales during the latter's year on Hudson Bay, acknowledged his debt to him for having "improved his navigational skills." They remained friends, and Wales was instrumental in bringing Hearne's journals to publication when Hearne was too ill to do so. Wales helped Cook edit his journals as well. The latter, who held Wales in high regard, sponsored him for fellowship in the Royal Society, which he received in 1776. Wales died in 1798.

—R. G.-S.

Temperatures ranged from a summer high of eighty-five degrees Fahrenheit to a winter low of minus forty-five. On January 6, Wales recorded "the spirits of wine, in which the plumb of the quadrant is immersed is now congealed to the consistence of a common jelly."

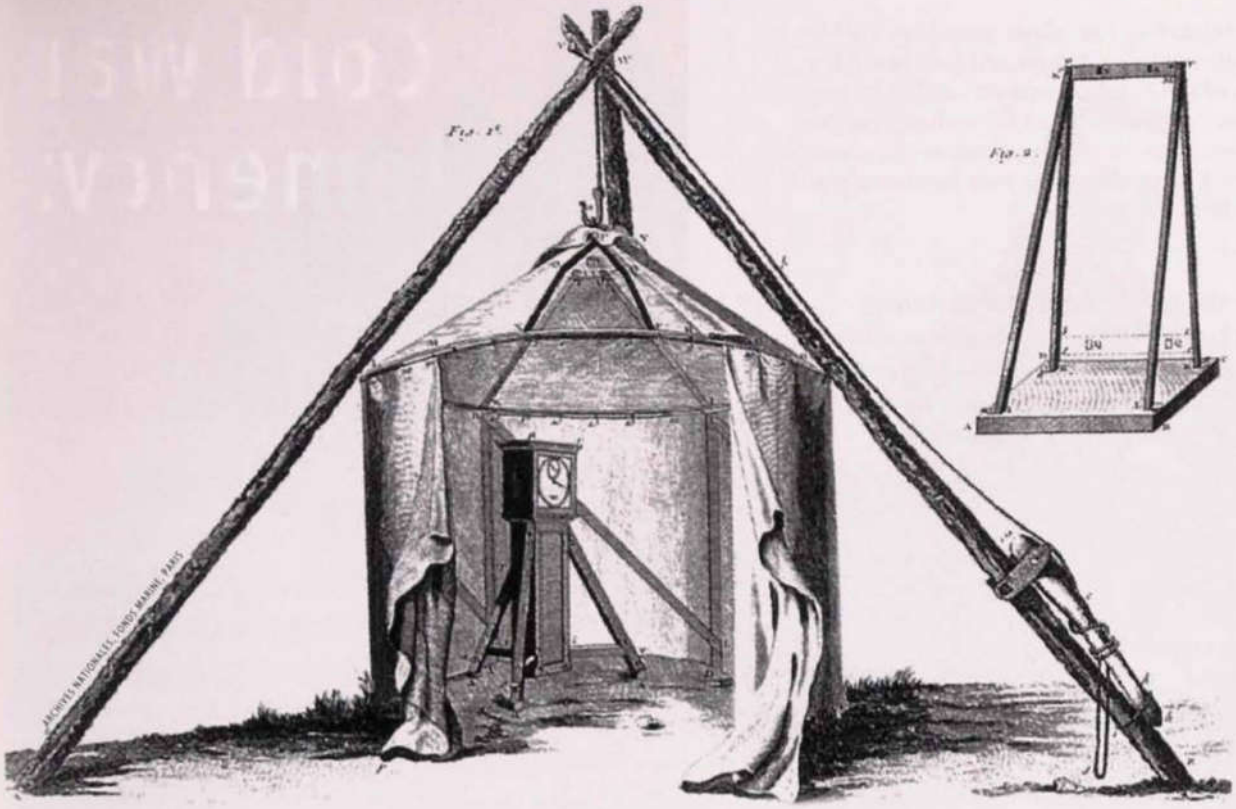
and which were supposed to correct for heat or cold, could be temperamental, particularly when faced with brutally hot, humid summers and long weeks of frigid Arctic temperatures. Human idiosyncrasies were also a consideration. American astronomer David Rittenhouse was said to have fainted with excitement during the 1769 transit, almost forgetting to record the initial time of contact.

Eight years earlier, the June 6, 1761 transit had been a comedy of errors. With the Seven Years' War in progress, one British ship was attacked when barely out of port. In spite of an agreement between England and France to exempt ships carrying the scientists, destinations had to be changed because the enemy had captured designated observation points. Cholera killed one French observer in Mexico, while inclement weather and poor instruments let others down. Establishing the precise moment of contact was a problem for each observer; they were not sure when to begin or end timing. When the resulting measurements proved unsatisfactory, the astronomical community pinned its hopes on 1769.

Britain spared no expense to make the 1769 transit a success. The Royal Society, chartered by Charles II in 1660 to advance the boundaries of science, sponsored the event with £4,000 provided by George III. It also made an arrangement with the Hudson's Bay Company, at the time under fire for its monopolistic practices and looking for a way to improve its public image, to absorb the cost of transporting two scientists to Prince of Wales Fort while paying the HBC £250 for their room and board. To lead the scientific expedition into Hudson Bay, the society chose the affable and highly regarded Yorkshireman, William Wales—an experienced mathematician, astronomer, teacher, and writer who had been employed by Nevil Maskelyne, the fifth Astronomer Royal, to compute lunar navigation tables for his *Nautical Almanac*. To accompany him, the Society chose Joseph Dymond, about whom less is known, though records indicate he spent some time employed by Maskelyne at the Greenwich Observatory. They were accorded the privilege of eating at the captain's table at sea and at the factor's table while at the fort. The only condition imposed by the HBC was that they have no access to company business and that they must attend Divine Service (though Dymond, leaving the impression of a man of petulant disposition, did not endear himself to the fort's chief factor by failing to show up for prayers).

Since only one voyage a year could be made to northern latitudes (and that during the three months of summer), they had to leave the end of May 1768. That they left home and family, and spent many weeks in ice-clogged seas and a year in a harsh environment at the most northern of the HBC's trading posts, speaks to a dedicated spirit of adventure.

En route aboard the *Prince Rupert*, accompanied by the *Seahorse* and the brig *Charlotte*, Wales spent most of his time on deck observing and recording their bearings, noting meteorological information and phenomena. He constantly checked his and Dymond's watches with Captain Joseph Richards's for accuracy and observed



This engraving from Jacques Brosse's *Great Voyages of Discovery, Circumnavigators and Scientists, 1764–1843* illustrates the prefabricated observatory James Cook used at Tahiti, likely similar to the one used by Wales and Dymond at Churchill. HBC factor at Prince of Wales Fort, John Fowler, described it as "a flimsy affair for the climate." Wales, in his journal, doesn't mention its dimensions, only that a foundation was dug to anchor it. "A stiff plank of dry English oak was driven four feet into the soil," to which the clock was screwed and set on a "stone of about a quarter of a ton weight, with a flat surface … so that the clock stood entirely independent of the observatory." Almost a month after it was erected in August 1768 in the fort's southeast bastion, Wales found that "the roof of the observatory would not permit us to take zenith distances of any stars on the arch of excess of the quadrant, without moving it farther to the southward … . As I could not hit on any method of determining the error of the line of collimation, which to me appeared satisfactory, except by observations of stars near the zenith, I resolved to take up the floor of the observatory and remove the piles on which the quadrant stood farther south." This took him and the carpenter four days to accomplish.

and recorded an eclipse of the moon June 29. After they arrived at Prince of Wales Fort and set up their prefabricated observatory, they continued their observations, often under great difficulty. Temperatures ranged from a summer high of eighty-five degrees Fahrenheit to a winter low of minus forty-five. On January 6, Wales recorded "the spirits of wine, in which the plumb of the quadrant is immersed is now congealed to the consistence of a common jelly. … Our little cabbin … was scarcely three yards square, and in which we constantly kept a very large fire." Even so their bedding froze.

June 3, 1769 dawned cloudy and hazy, intermittently clear, with a temperature of forty-four degrees. The transit began at noon, 56 minutes, 49 seconds. Initial contact proved problematic. By Dymond's timing, Venus took 19 minutes, 5 seconds to be completely immersed in the Sun. Wales timed it at 18 minutes, 54 seconds. However, they agreed on the time of egress – 19 minutes, 15 seconds. (Venus, from their vantage point, took 7 hours, 19 minutes, 40 seconds to cross the Sun.) Wales remarked in his journal:

> We took for the instant of internal contact at egress, the time when the thread of light disappeared before the proceeding limb of the planet from which time W.W. took notice that he had told [*sic*] 24" when the limbs of the Sun and Venus were apparently in contact: a circumstance which he did not venture to attend to at the ingress.

Wales and Dymond were disappointed observers, but they were not the only ones. Determining with sufficient precision the times of Venus's ingress and egress plagued everyone. As had occurred during the first transit eight years earlier, Venus, instead of entering and exiting sharply, appeared to remain attached to the limb of the Sun, elongating as it seemed to struggle to free itself before pulling away. Astronomers concluded that the strange distortion, dubbed the black-drop effect, was caused by an atmosphere on Venus. Wales gives us his impression of this vexing problem:

> Soon after Venus was half immerged, a bright crescent, or rim of light, encompassed all that part of her circumference which was off the Sun;

thereby rendering her whole periphery visible. This continued very bright until within a few minutes of the internal contact, and then vanished away gradually. We saw nothing like the appearance of an atmosphere (unless the above-mentioned phae-nomenon may be thought to proceed from thence).

While the results were disappointing, the 1769 transit of Venus brought together scientists from many nations to solve a fundamental problem, opening up new avenues for mutual cooperation.

Though the most vexing problem, it wasn't the only one to prevent success. Imprecisely located latitudes and instrumental flaws produced margins of error. The varying visual acuities of the observers, too, combined to defeat the noble effort.[2]

While the results were disappointing, the 1769 transit of Venus brought together scientists from many nations to solve a fundamental problem, opening up new avenues for mutual cooperation in government, science, and society, while advancing knowledge in a spirit of goodwill unique for the time. For Wales, the failure to pinpoint the Sun's distance was no career impediment. The Royal Society paid him £200 plus expenses upon his return, and after he served James Cook as astronomer during the latter's 1772–1775 Pacific voyage, he spent the rest of his life teaching mathematics in London. Dymond, however, disappears from history.

Rita Griffin-Short is an archaeologist with special interests in ancient medicine and astronomy. She is currently working on a book about the British Enlightenment.

et cetera

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[2] Transits of Venus in 1874 and 1882 were also widely observed to determine Earth's distance from the Sun, but observers were not uniform in their judgments and the results were unsatisfying. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a series of heliometric observations were made through the mediation of Mars and the asteroids Victoria, Iris, and Sappho. In 1931, England's Harold Spencer Jones led a worldwide effort to determine the distance to the Sun by triangulating the distance of the asteroid Eros when it passed near the Earth in 1930–31, photographing it more than 1,200 times. He derived a solar parallax of 8.790, corresponding to a distance of 93 million miles.

Cold War Clemency:

by Mark Reynolds **SS Brigadeführer Kurt Meyer made many Canadians' blood boil: he was accorded more courtesies than a man convicted of war crimes ought to be. But his trial, punishment, and eventual release had more to do with the politics of the Cold War than with the claims of justice.**

On a dark October night in 1951, three men slipped silently through a window in the forbidding ramparts of Dorchester prison in New Brunswick. All were dressed in baggy military clothing, dark and nondescript. After jumping into a waiting car, the men raced towards Halifax, where a plane waited to take them to Europe.

After a long transatlantic flight, the plane touched down on a dark, rain-shrouded tarmac in Germany. The pilot landed hard, and a tire burst. Out of control, the plane barely skidded to a stop at the end of the runway. Most of the men aboard were shaken, but one emerged from the plane smiling—he'd had closer encounters with death than that. His escorts walked him to a waiting vehicle. He breathed in the sweet air of his Fatherland.

SS Brigadeführer Kurt Meyer was home.

Unrepentant Nazi, ex-bodyguard to Hitler, and murderer of eighteen Canadian prisoners of war. A hero, a soldier, a family man, a wronged innocent. A potential new führer of a fourth reich. Victim of a kangaroo court, shameless manipulator of the justice system. No matter what the opinion of Meyer, there is no doubt that he was a political hot potato, a source of international friction for the government of Louis St. Laurent, and one of Canada's most notorious inmates.

Meyer's transfer from the gloomy confines of Dorchester prison and eventual release in Germany three years later had very little to do with the justice

The Kurt Meyer Conundrum

of his convictions or the magnitude of his crimes, but very much to do with Cold War politics.

Hitler's youngest general, "Panzer" Meyer had fought all over Europe, from the blitzkrieg of Poland to the frozen fields of the Russian front. He was a highly decorated soldier with a reputation for personal bravery and battlefield cunning. Too small for the regular army, Meyer had joined first the police, then the newly formed SS – the army of the National Socialist party – in 1931. He had served as a bodyguard to Hitler before being sent to join the lead elements of the Polish invasion in 1939. By early June 1944, he was posted as a regimental commander with the Twelfth SS, under Brigadeführer Fritz Witt.

Although still holding sway over most of Europe, the war machine of the Third Reich was badly overstretched. Hitler's madness had left millions of his soldiers on the steppes of Russia. The Bolshevik army was poised to launch a massive assault in the East. The Allied campaign through Italy was progressing slowly up the boot of Italy – Rome had already fallen. Men and equipment were being used up at an alarming rate.

Meyer's Twelfth SS was created as a direct result of these events – it was a division composed largely of German youth no older than eighteen years, as well as conscripts drawn from the populations of Germany's European conquests. These well-trained but inexperienced troops were positioned near Lisieux, France, as a reserve to send to the front lines when the Allied invasion of Western Europe finally came.

When the D-Day invasion of June 6 began, the Twelfth SS was sent to the Normandy coast with orders to launch a counterattack and drive the invading armies into the sea. Meyer established the headquarters of his Twenty-fifth Panzergrenadier Regiment at the Abbaye Ardennes outside Caen in the late hours of D-Day. The invading army Meyer was destined to meet was First Canadian Corps, which was pushing from Juno beach towards Caen.

In the brutal back-and-forth tank and infantry

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Kurt Meyer (above) in his cell in Aurich, Germany, December 1945.

The Abbaye Ardennes outside Caen, France (below), where Meyer established the headquarters of his Twenty-fifth Panzergrenadier Regiment in June 1944. Here, eighteen Canadian soldiers taken prisoner were executed, many with a single shot to the head.

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battles that ensued, four hundred Canadian troops would fall prey to the Hitlerjugend under Meyer's command. Not all would die in battle.

At least forty-one Canadian soldiers were murdered after being taken prisoner by the Twelfth SS division. Eighteen of those soldiers died while being held in the grounds of the Abbaye Ardennes – many executed with a single shot to the head. The Twelfth SS came to be known as "The Murder Division," and they would be pitted against the Canadians for the remainder of the Normandy campaign. With the battlefield death of Fritz Witt on June 14, they would do so under the command of Brigadeführer Meyer, until they were finally overwhelmed and Meyer captured by Belgian partisans in September 1944.

Little more than a year later, Meyer would stand

The courtroom was a magnificent affair . . . . As theatre, it

try Meyer. With speed of the essence and Parliament then on its summer break, the Privy Council had to draft the statutes, which they were able to do under the authority of the War Measures Act.

The trial was closely watched in Canada and abroad – the much larger Nuremberg trials were yet to start, and the Canadian trial would serve both as a test run and an assurance to the German people that due process was being observed.

The courtroom was a magnificent affair – "a three-ring circus, complete with barkers and lion-tamers," according to Foster. The four brigadiers and General Foster sat on a raised dais in full dress uni-

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / PA-141890

Meyer flanked by officer escorts at court. After a three-week trial, he was found responsible for the deaths of eighteen Canadians held prisoner at the Abbaye Ardennes. The sentence – death by firing squad – was scheduled for January 7, 1946.

Lieutenant-Colonel Bruce Macdonald (above, centre) led the prosecution against Meyer at a trail in Aurich, Germany, which began in December 1945.

trial for those eighteen deaths. The court was in the former Kriegsmarine barracks in Aurich, where the Canadian occupying troops had their German headquarters. Presiding over the jury of four Canadian brigadiers that was to sit in judgment of Meyer was Major-General Harry Foster, who had matched wits with him on the battlefields of Europe only a year earlier.

The trial, which started December 10, 1945, was without precedent. As with all the Allied countries, Canada had to enact special war-crimes legislation to form, the Red Ensign hanging behind them. As theatre, it was all the assembled press and handpicked "good Germans" in the audience could ask for. As justice, it was something much less than that.

Lieutenant-Colonel Bruce Macdonald, who had spent much of the previous six months scouring the POW and refugee camps of Europe and North America in search of evidence against his man, led the prosecution. He had assembled an impressive amount of evidence that showed that Twelfth SS troops had murdered unarmed Canadian prisoners.

What he didn't have was the names of all the men who had pulled the triggers, nor any conclusive evidence that Meyer had given any orders for them to do so.

With the monsters of the highest echelons of the Nazi regime still awaiting trial, it was critically important that Macdonald secure a conviction. Luckily, the scales of justice were tipped in his favour. It was Macdonald himself who wrote the rules of procedure for the unprecedented court. Where witnesses could not be located, his rules of evidence allowed the court to accept hearsay testimony, along with sworn affidavits – which could not be challenged. Given the

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Brigadier Harry Foster, commander of the Seventh Canadian Infantry Brigade, in Normandy in June 1944. Eighteen months later, as a major-general, he was appointed president of the court that tried Meyer.

millions of people displaced by the war, many of them in the Soviet-controlled sphere of Europe, this latter aspect was especially open to abuse. The final judicial novelty introduced by Macdonald was that anything said by the accused while in custody – whether or not he had been informed of his rights – was admissible as evidence.

In addition to the questionable tactic of inventing a set of laws under which to convict Meyer, the war-crimes laws were directly at odds with the War Measures Act under which they were enacted. The maximum penalty for an offence under the WMA was five years; however, the maximum under the new war-crimes statutes was death.

After a three-week trial, Meyer was found guilty of three of the six charges he faced – counselling his troops to deny quarter and two charges related to "responsibility" for the deaths of the eighteen prisoners who were murdered on the grounds of his headquarters at Abbaye Ardennes. The sentence, pronounced three days after Christmas, was death by firing squad. The date was to be January 7.

What satisfaction the people of Canada felt over this verdict soon turned to outrage when General Chris Vokes, as the commanding officer of Canada's occupying force in Germany, first twice postponed and then commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. He said that Meyer's degree of responsibility for the murders had not been shown clearly enough – in fact the only reason Vokes agreed to a life sentence was because he "didn't have the guts to let him off entirely."

That the court heard testimony from one of Meyer's own troops – who said he had witnessed Meyer tell troops to not take further prisoners minutes before seven Canadians were murdered at his headquarters – seemed not to matter. Meyer's prevarication as to whether he had seen the bodies in the Abbaye courtyard also had little bearing on Vokes's judgment of his deeds. Observers at the trial had no doubt that Meyer was guilty. Why the leniency?

Simply put, Major-General Foster and General Vokes knew that they were administering "victor's justice," and that they could very easily be charged with the same offences as the German. Vokes admitted that his own troops had murdered civilians and prisoners in his Italian campaign. A British soldier claimed to have seen Canadian troops kill six German soldiers who had surrendered on the beaches of Normandy during the D-Day landings, and Meyer claimed that one of his reconnaissance patrols had been slaughtered by troops under the command of General Foster. These incidents didn't lessen Meyer's guilt one whit, but it certainly made his judges less comfortable condemning him.

In addition to the public outrage the commutation caused, Meyer's life imprisonment imposed a new difficulty on the Canadian government. Unlike the other forces that participated in the D-Day landings, Canada did not have a zone of occupation within Germany or any facilities in Europe to hold him. He was therefore committed to Dorchester prison in New Brunswick, thus becoming the only German war criminal in his circumstances to be held outside of Europe. He was sent by ocean liner to North America, arriving in Halifax with a shipload of war brides.

To avoid recognition, he was hustled off the boat

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in a Canadian private's uniform and into a waiting car that was to take him to his new home. Harry Foster, his judge at Aurich, was there to greet him in the warm spring evening.

"For a moment we stared at each other. I wanted to say something appropriate but couldn't find the right words. ... He nodded his head to me ... then squared his shoulders and marched to the car."

Meyer was furious and humiliated to be in prison. He recalled in his memoirs that he had a rapist on one side of him and a mass murderer on the other. For their part, convicts had standards too – no one in the prison was too pleased to have the monster of Normandy amongst them. Meyer had to be housed away from the general prison population in a hospital cell. Nonetheless, he adjusted to his new circumstances and within a month had become the prison librarian. He spent his free hours reading, exercising, and gardening when allowed. He contemplated suicide, but the thought of his wife Kate and their five children – whom he had barely seen through six years of war and imprisonment – kept him going.

If the events of one war were to put the Nazi in jail, the spectre of another would help to get him out. Meyer's time fighting the Bolshevik armies during Germany's Russian campaign left him a bitter anti-Communist. When the Soviets blockaded Berlin in 1948, the Cold War was on, and the devastated territory of occupied Germany was likely to be the site of the next conflagration. Men with proven battlefield savvy and firsthand knowledge of Soviet tactics were needed, and needed fast.

The West therefore needed a strong Germany on its side, but with the German people humiliated by their occupation and resentful of the criminalization of their nation, securing them as allies would be no easy task. The Marshall Plan – a $13-billion, American-sponsored, postwar economic recovery program for Europe – went a long way to bringing West Germany into the fold of free Europe, but distrust festered in still-fresh wounds. The perception that the Allies had used the various war-crimes trials for vengeance rather than justice was an especially sore point.

Though public anger in Canada was still high over Meyer's "easy" sentence, he did have some friends in the country, though not all were known to him. Some journalists who attended his trial in Aurich, notably Ralph Allen, then of the *Globe and Mail*, felt that the general had been shafted by a political trial.

"If the Kurt Meyer trial was unfair its greatest unfairness wasn't to Meyer himself. It was the final overriding unfairness to a set of precepts which, if we deny in the face of our enemies, we may yet deny to ourselves," Allen wrote in 1950 in *Maclean's* magazine.

Some members of the Canadian military were sympathetic towards the Nazi as well. Major James Millar, the command chaplain based in Halifax, visited Meyer at the beginning of every month. He grew to like and respect Meyer in their monthly meetings. His reports of conversations show that the convict was remarkably well informed on current events.

Convicts had standards too – no one in the prison was too pleased to have the monster of Normandy amongst them.

Starting May 7, 1949, Fritz "Fred" Lichtenberg of Moncton, New Brunswick, started accompanying Millar on his visits. Lichtenberg was a building contractor, a German who had immigrated to Canada from Germany in 1914. He believed Meyer to have been wrongly convicted, and set to work to secure his release. Semiretired, he went back to work in order to finance his campaign to free the German general, as well as to send money and gifts to Meyer's impoverished family in Germany. He secured the services of H.P. MacKeen, a prominent Halifax lawyer, who immediately began the process to appeal Meyer's sentence. Their brief, which contested the legality of the war-crimes statutes under which Meyer was convicted, went all the way to the Privy Council. It was rejected.

Lichtenberg didn't work alone on this project – he was helped, he said later, by a group of prominent people in Halifax who wished to remain nameless. Newspaper articles speculated that this group included senior military officers. In addition to their uneasiness over how well they would fare in similar trials were they in Meyer's shoes, the officers may have been repaying a favour. In his monthly talks with Millar, Meyer frequently expressed his willingness to trade his knowledge of Red Army tactics for

BUNDESARCHIV / 183 / 1989 041

Kurt Meyer decorated by Adolf Hitler in February 1943.

The Privy Council had ordered that "adequate precautions be taken to ensure that there would be no publicity regarding the action contemplated." ... Meyer was smuggled out of Dorchester in a Canadian military uniform in the dark of night.

some reduction of his sentence or even just a temporary release.

On September 6, 1950, Meyer told Millar that it was his firm belief that "the enemy of Canada is militant communism, under the political and military leadership of Russia. Russia ... is the one and only enemy of Canada."

He said that it was his firm belief that Russia would attack Canada from the north, and reiterated his willingness to help Canadian or United Nations forces prepare for the assault. Millar came to the prison again at the beginning of October, and then there was an unexplained gap in their meetings until the end of December.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA / NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / PA-93141

When Meyer was released from Dorchester Penitentiary in October 1951, many Canadians were outraged.

At the same time this gap occurred, the Canadian military was conducting a training exercise near Whitehorse. A strategy to slow up a possible Soviet assault down the Alaska Highway was being devised. According to Tony Foster (son of Harry Foster), Brigadier John Proctor was leading the operation. Brigadier George Kitching from army headquarters was there to observe.

"At the morning coffee break I suggested to Kitching that the man we really needed to advise us was Kurt Meyer. I remember how brilliantly he had thwarted every crossing we tried to make in Normandy," recalled Proctor.

"Who do you think that guy is on your syndicate?" replied Kitching.

It was Meyer. According to Tony Foster, the army had managed to secretly spring Meyer from prison to take advantage of his military abilities. There is no proof of this – Meyer's memoirs don't mention the incident, nor are there conclusive military records.

In any case, it wouldn't happen again. A year later Meyer would be out of Dorchester permanently. Some posited the transfer as a quid pro quo for Meyer's service, but in fact the reasons are much more complex.

On October 15, 1951, Dr. Werner Dankwort, the ambassador-designate for the Federal Republic of Germany, called upon Charles Ritchie of the Canadian Department of External Affairs. His message to the Canadian bureaucrat paints a fascinating picture of Cold War politics – and Meyer's place in them. Ritchie recalled:

> He had heard rumours, which he could not substantiate, that the Soviet Government were about to release some twenty thousand Germans. ... Such a gesture on the part of the Soviet Union would, he said, make a considerable appeal to the German people. The Ambassador suggested that thus it was politically a propitious moment for a gesture on the part of the Canadian Government in connection with Meyer.

At this point, the cabinet of Louis St. Laurent had already decided to transfer Meyer out of Dorchester to Werl, a British-run prison in Germany, so he could be closer to his family. Recognizing that anything to do with Meyer was bound to raise a fuss in the Canadian papers, the Privy Council had ordered that "adequate precautions be taken to

ensure that there would be no publicity regarding the action contemplated." With this in mind, Meyer was smuggled out of Dorchester in a Canadian military uniform in the dark of night on October 19, 1951.

When the news of the transfer broke, Canadians were outraged. Many saw it as a first step to his eventual release. Brooke Claxton, the minister of national defence, was inundated with telegrams and letters from groups demanding Meyer be returned to Canada. Consistent with the temper of the times, Claxton's aide made careful notes on which messages were from "communist" organizations.

Meanwhile Meyer was in Werl – at least for the time being. A week after his transfer, Doug How, a reporter for Canadian Press, stopped by the Meyer household to ask Kate Meyer, Kurt's wife, what she thought of her husband's transfer. He was shocked to see the prisoner at home – unbeknownst to Canadian authorities, the authorities at Werl had granted him a day pass to visit his family.

Meyer's release was soon to be permanent. Throughout 1951 and 1952, the occupying powers were beginning to realize that the issue of war criminals remained an obstacle to reintegrating West Germany into postwar Europe. It was noted that most of those convicted had received sentences far longer than civilian criminals did for comparable crimes. France, the United Kingdom, and the United States started to cast about for a mechanism to exercise clemency that would placate both a bitter Germany and a still-vengeful Allied population.

The solution was a consultative board that would have on it three representatives from the responsible occupying power and two Germans. These five would review the sentences and convictions of all war criminals and recommend clemency where appropriate, without being able to question the validity of the original conviction.

This placed the Canadian government in a dilemma. As Meyer was in a British prison, he would be eligible for a review; however, as Canada was not an occupying power, it could not have its own representative on the consultative board. The only way Canada could prevent losing control over Meyer's sentence would be to remove him from Werl and bring him back to Canada, which would not be politically expedient.

As one memorandum noted resignedly, Canada's limited stake in the war-crimes process meant "We would do well to accept the arrangements eventually agreed upon by the three Occupying Powers and the German Government."

By 1953, when Meyer's clemency hearing came up, all Canada was able to do was send Brigadier Sherman Lett as an observer. In his report to the Department of National Defence, Lett concurred with the board that "the minimum clemency granted to Meyer should be commutation of his sentence to imprisonment to 21 years with the opportunity of earning by good conduct a remission of one-third of that period."

It turned out Meyer would be released even earlier than that – he had developed arthritis, which his doctor said was aggravated by his prison stay. He was freed September 7, 1954, having served roughly ten years of his sentence, including pretrial custody. Fritz Lichtenberg flew to Germany from Moncton to greet him.

Again Canadians were aghast. Bruce Macdonald, now a Crown prosecutor in Windsor, Ontario, said, "Meyer's release can be justified on the basis of international political expediency only." It was widely speculated that Meyer was going to serve as a general – perhaps commander-in-chief – of the reconstituted German army. One newspaper speculated that he could become a new führer.

In fact Meyer did dabble in politics, becoming the head of HIAG, an association of ex-SS men that was fighting for recognition as legitimate veterans and entitlement to pensions and other benefits denied the outlawed SS.

The *Ottawa Citizen's Weekend* magazine ran a long feature on Meyer's postwar activities under the headline "New Beer Hall Hero" and speculated that he was backed by German industrialists bent on recreating the glory days of the Third Reich. It was noted that Meyer, loyal SS man to the end, never denounced Hitler or his ideas. The 1957 publication of *Panzergrenadiere*, Meyer's bestselling memoirs, provided more grist for the rumour mill.

In fact, Meyer never sought public office; he became instead a beer salesman. One of his clients was the Canadian army mess hall in Soest, where he sometimes would hoist a pint with the troops. That stopped when the newspapers found out, and a red-faced Department of National Defence ordered him out.

Weakened by his imprisonment and war service, Meyer died on December 23, 1961 – his fifty-first birthday. He never succeeded in clearing his name or the name of his service, but he held until his death that he was a wronged man.

"Soldiers should be judged by soldiers and not by politicians," he said. "A baker can't judge a tailor."

In the end, of course, he seemed to have forgotten that it was soldiers who had convicted him. It was the politicians who set him free.

Mark Reynolds is a writer and editor in Montreal and a frequent contributor to the *Beaver*. His last article, "Land of the King of Portugal," appeared in December 2002.

et cetera

Meeting of Generals **by Tony Foster. Methuen, Toronto, 1986.**

Casual Slaughters and Accidental Judgments: Canadian War Crimes Prosecutions, 1944–1948 **by Patrick Brodie. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1997.**

Thanks to a hazy concept of geography and a stubborn allegiance to Manifest Destiny, a swampy

A Line in the Water: The Squabble

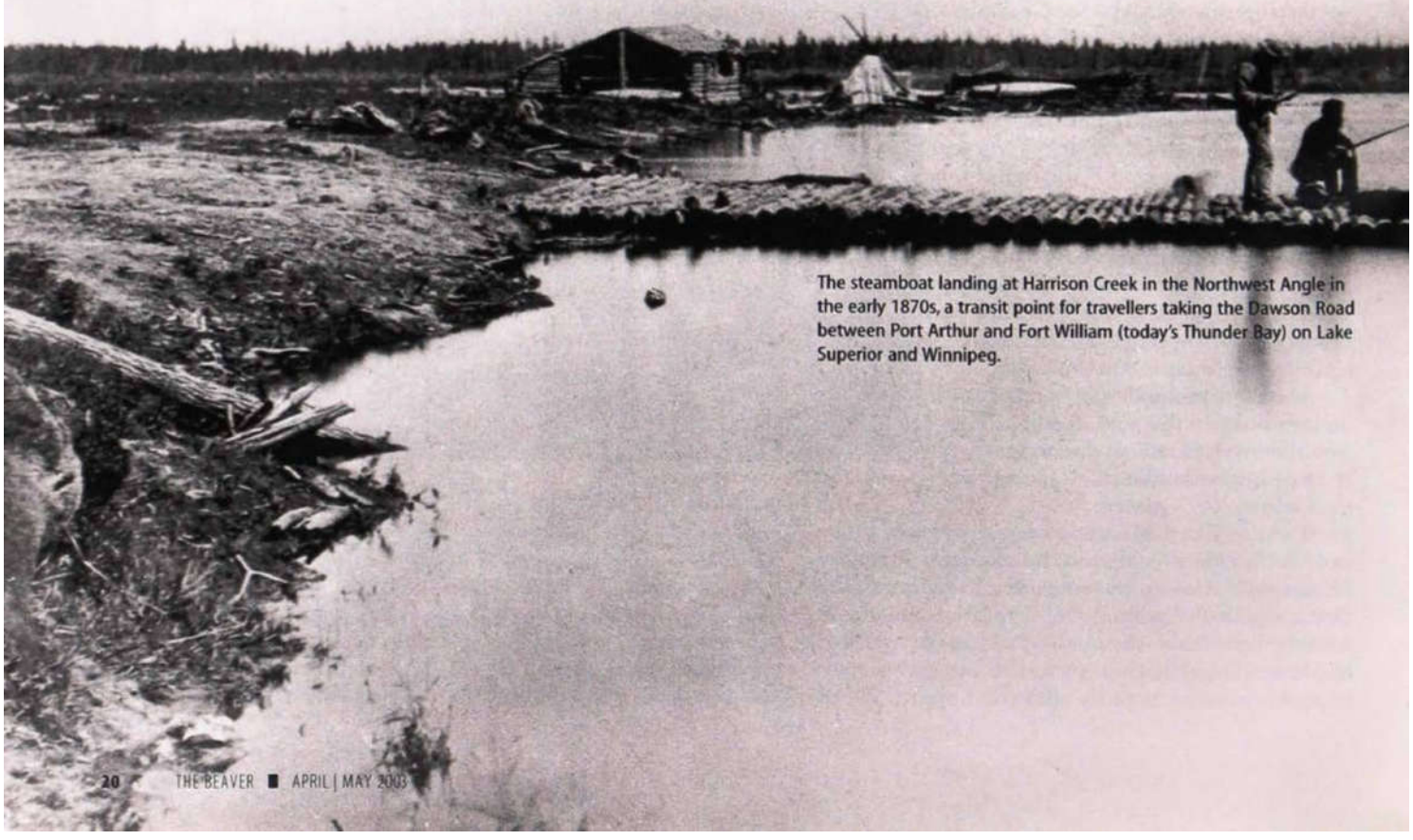
How did one of Canada's major historic sites, Fort St. Charles on Lake of the Woods, come to be in the United States? I pondered this as I drove south on a winding gravel road from East Braintree, Manitoba, to Angle Inlet, Minnesota, in August 2001. In 1732, Pierre Gaultier de La Vérendrye, a French-Canadian explorer and trader, built Fort St. Charles on a peninsula, now Magnusson Island, at Angle Inlet's mouth, but when surveyors drew the international boundary line down the inlet's central channel in 1872, Magnusson Island became, by a stone's throw, part of the Northwest Angle, a tiny promontory of American territory that sticks like a thumb into Canada's belly.

The Angle, 712 square kilometres of water dotted with islands, 337 square kilometres of dense forest and swamp, is virtually uninhabited; most of the mainland belongs to the Ojibway of Red Lake, Minnesota, but they don't live there. The international boundary is a curving line in the water, and a straight, invisible line through impenetrable bush. On the road to Angle Inlet, I found the border marked by a crude sign and a wooden structure, like an outhouse, in a roadside clearing. There wasn't a soul in sight. The outhouse was a videophone booth, with buttons to push for the U.S. or Canada; visitors are expected voluntarily to announce their arrival and departure. When I crossed into the Angle, a disembodied American voice boomed out without delay, but coming back I waited thirty minutes in a cold drizzle for Canada customs to acknowledge my presence. It was tempting to drive right past the wretched booth; only the crows would be the wiser.

The Northwest Angle makes no geographic or political sense, I discovered, because it is a mistake. In 1783, following the American Revolution, the Treaty of Paris, defining the border separating Britain's North American colonies from the newly independent United States, stipulated that the western boundary run "through Lake Superior, northwest of Isles Royale and Phelipeaux* to the Long Lake and the water communications between it and the Lake of the Woods, to the said Lake of the Woods; thence through the said lake to the most northwestern point thereof, and from thence, on a due west course, to the River Mississippi."

Trouble was, as any Montreal fur trader could have pointed out, the Mississippi River rises not

*A nonexistent island, Phelipeaux nevertheless appeared on maps through the eighteenth century as did the fictional Long Lake.



The steamboat landing at Harrison Creek in the Northwest Angle in the early 1870s, a transit point for travellers taking the Dawson Road between Port Arthur and Fort William (today's Thunder Bay) on Lake Superior and Winnipeg.

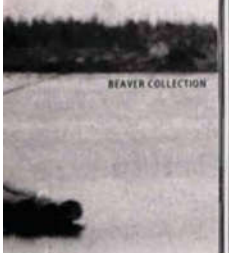
bit of Lake of the Woods is forever America.

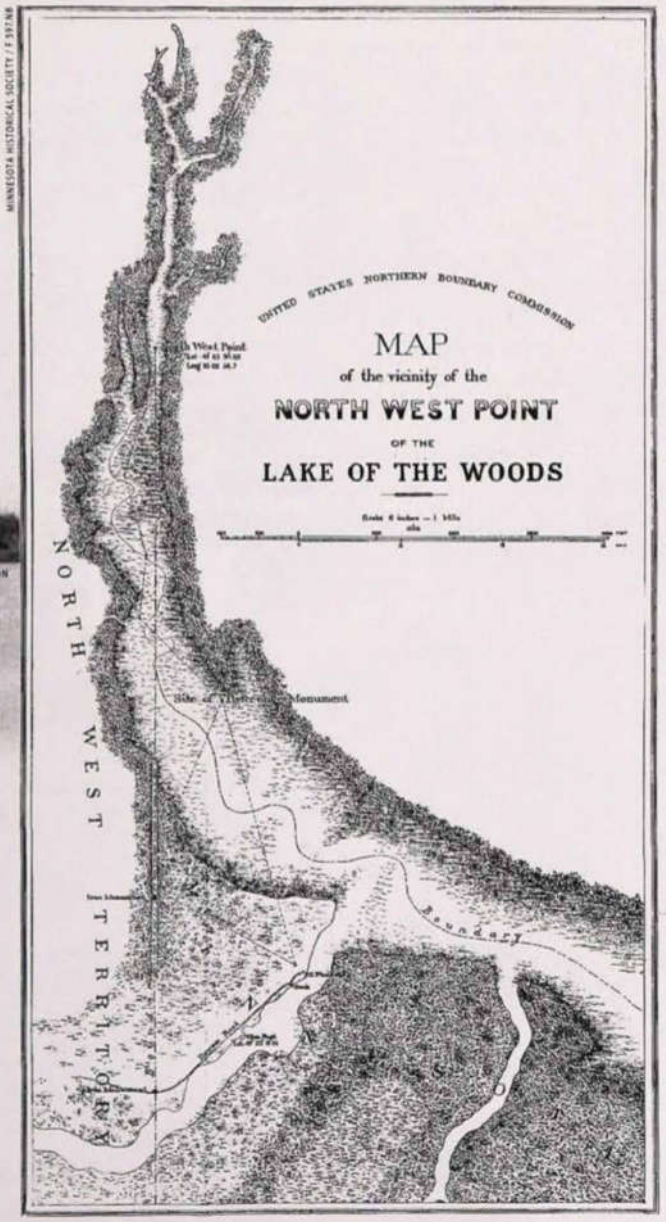
by Heather Robertson

over the Northwest Angle

west, but southeast, of Lake of the Woods. The negotiators had relied on a 1755 map by Anglo-American cartographer John Mitchell, but since the interior of the continent was uncharted, Mitchell had drawn his map from hearsay and unreliable historical records. He'd noted himself: "The Head of the Missisipi [*sic*] is not yet known: It is supposed to arise about the 50th degree of Latitude, and Western bounds of this map." Mitchell's guess placed the source of the Mississippi in the middle of Lake Winnipeg.

The merchants and traders of Montreal and Sault Ste. Marie, whose prosperous posts were scattered throughout both the Lake Winnipeg and Mississippi River watersheds, were enraged that the British had stupidly handed over their fur trade empire to the Americans. They refused to abandon their posts, and the Americans, preoccupied with the New England boundary far to the east, did not try to evict them. To discredit the treaty, however, the North West Company was determined to prove the Mississippi's true source. In 1797, they hired an enterprising surveyor, David Thompson, to find it.





A map of Angle Inlet (left) from *Reports upon the Survey of the Boundary between the Territory of the United States and the Possessions of Great Britain*, published in 1878 by the United States Northern Boundary Commission, showing the convoluted border.

NORTHWEST ANGLE
&
LAKE OF THE WOODS

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Thompson, twenty-seven, had spent thirteen years exploring and mapping the north as an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. Blind in one eye, with only an elementary education at a charity school in London, Thompson, an evangelical Christian, was proud, prickly, indefatigable, oblivious to discomfort, and supremely confident in his own largely self-taught mathematical skills. During the next ten months, he surveyed the company's posts from Lake of the Woods to Lake Winnipegosis and southwest to the Missouri River, returning via the upper Mississippi to report that the river's source was Turtle Lake, latitude 47.38 degrees, while he located the northwestern point of Lake of the Woods, Rat Portage, now Kenora, two degrees north at latitude 49.77.

Thompson exposed an embarrassing gap in the boundary, but for the next twenty years the British and Americans were too busy bickering and bloodying each other's noses in other boundary disputes, most notably the War of 1812–1814, to pay any attention to the midwestern "Indian territory," a wilderness they believed to be inhabited by barbaric heathens debauched with rum by licentious fur traders. When the forty-ninth parallel was finally chosen as the international boundary between Lake of the Woods and the Rockies in 1818, the Mississippi was correctly located, but the forty-ninth parallel still ran 100 kilometres south of Rat Portage.

The gap could have been closed simply by running the boundary along the lake's south shore, or from Rainy River to the forty-ninth parallel, but the Americans coveted Rat Portage: it would give them control over Canada's fur-trade route. The Hudson's Bay Company, which absorbed the Nor'westers in 1821, would not stand for this nonsense. When British and American surveyors arrived on Lake of the Woods in 1823, the HBC curtly informed the British

Thompson exposed an embarrassing gap in the boundary, but for the next twenty years the British and Americans were too busy bickering and bloodying each other's noses in other boundary disputes to pay any attention to the midwestern "Indian territory."

government that retention of Rat Portage was "essential" to the company and British interests. Nevertheless, David Thompson, now the British astronomer, and the Americans agreed on Rat Portage: they had both missed the true northwestern point, a bay misleadingly named Shoal Lake. The British, desperate to find an alternative, ordered Thompson back to Lake of the Woods the next summer to explore its western shore more diligently. Taking measurements in Angle Inlet on July 26, Thompson chose a site for a stone cairn to mark the lake's most northwestern corner. "Sent Belleau & 6 men up this lead of water to search for Stones," he wrote in his notebook on July 26, "but they found none. All is alluvial & we have seen no Stones or Rock for the last 6 miles, searched & found a Tree of Red Oak." The next day, working in heavy rain and gale-force winds, he noted: "Sent the men with 26 oak Logs to build a Monument of 6 1/2 feet by 6 1/2 feet & 12 feet high, the Logs notched into each other & covered on the top with Aspin Logs, of which also the upper of this Monument is built." He nailed on a tin plate identifying it as "North West corner of Lake of the Woods No. 1."

But Thompson's crude map left the site's exact location open to question, so in 1825 the British sent an independent astronomer, Dr. J.L. Tiarks, on a secret mission to Angle Inlet to confirm that monument No. 1 was indeed the northwest corner of Lake

Canadian geologist George M. Dawson in 1872 at a reconstructed log monument at the site of David Thompson's 1824 marker at Angle Inlet.

of the Woods. Tiarks found that it was, but only by a whisker, and he feared the Americans would dismiss the difference as consequential. Then he noticed the marsh at the end of the inlet. Pushing his canoe through the reeds, he followed a winding channel to a small pond: this, he declared, was the most northwesterly point of Lake of the Woods. The Americans, furious at being caught by surprise, had to agree; they had not challenged Thompson's measurements, and Tiarks had made irreproachable calculations with modern instruments.

Now that the boundary point had been moved to a remote and worthless swamp, how to join it to the forty-ninth parallel ceased to be important. The gap remained until 1842, when the British and Americans agreed to draw a line due south from Angle Inlet to the forty-ninth parallel. There was no rush. Another thirty years passed before a second joint commission was appointed in 1872 to survey from Lake of the Woods to the Rockies. Its members included a new nation, Canada, and the Anglo-Canadian commissioner, Donald R. Cameron, was secretly instructed to reclaim, if possible, the Northwest Angle.

Cameron, a cocky artillery captain who didn't know a sextant from a compass, was a political appointment; his father-in-law, Sir Charles Tupper, was Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald's closest crony. In September 1872, Cameron travelled west to the Red River hamlet of Pembina with twenty tons of baggage, forty-four noncommissioned officers and men of the Royal Engineers, and an entourage of forty-two civilians. Their ranks included, in addition to astronomers and surveyors, a blacksmith, carpenter, mason, baker, shoemaker, tailor, photographer, two medical doctors, and a geologist. Since the expedition would winter in the west, Cameron packed a library of several hundred books. A few, *At Home in the Wilderness* and *Shifts of Camp Life*, were practical, but he brought books on fishing and shooting, mountaineering, Arctic exploration, and the Battle of Waterloo. "Most numerous," says historian John Parsons in *West on the 49th Parallel*, "were the works of fiction, history, essays, plays and poetry by such authors as Dickens, Dumas, Fielding, Scott, Trollope, Sterne, Smollett, Swift, Carlyle, Thackeray, Macaulay, Milton, Shakespeare, Byron, Wordsworth, Hood and Pope."

The poetry may have been selected by Cameron's young wife Emma, who came along with their infant child. The impropriety of one woman sharing quarters with eighty-six men in a frontier camp, a compound of frame buildings named Fort Dufferin, struck the Camerons as soon as they arrived. They departed with haste for Fort Garry. But the Canadians' self-indulgence aroused the jealousy of the grizzled, stiff-necked American commissioner, Archibald Campbell.

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF MANITOBA / N9338

Trader, entrepreneur, and politician, James McKay (above) was a prominent figure in the Red River colony as it made its transition to the province of Manitoba. Son of a Scottish boat-brigade guide and a Métis mother, he was instrumental in 1872 in locating David Thompson's original 1824 wooden marker at Angle Inlet, believed to indicate the far northwest corner of Lake of the Woods.

BEAVER COLLECTION

British and Canadian officers of the North American Boundary Commission of 1872–1875. Commissioner Donald R. Cameron, seated third from left, was the son-in-law of Sir Charles Tupper, an intimate of Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, and a political appointment. He didn't last long on site. Having brought his wife and realizing the impropriety of having a woman at a frontier camp, he and Mrs. Cameron soon departed for Red River.

His men, expecting to stay only a month or two, were camped in tents. His astronomers' dilapidated instruments were inferior to those of the British, and the British had beaten him to Lake of the Woods.

A Canadian surveyor, A.G. Forrest, had gone to Angle Inlet in August to search for Thompson's monument No. 1. Forrest scoured the ground, but he found no trace of the log pyramid Thompson had built forty-eight years earlier. Local Ojibway told him that it had burned in a forest fire, and because the lake level was more than a metre and a half higher than it had been in 1824, the site was under water. To confirm their story, they brought him a charred, decayed oak log and offered to guide him to the site. But Forrest suspected a hoax; vast tracts of surrounding bush had recently been burned over, and he rejected the Ojibways' request for payment as "preposterous." Elderly Ojibway who had watched Thompson's crew build the monument carried the oak log back to their camp.

Forrest was still searching in October when the British and American surveyors marched to the inlet from Fort Garry along a rutted wagon trail, the Dawson Road. Named for its engineer, Simon Dawson, the trail was the last link in Canada's ambitious land-and-water route linking the Great Lakes to the prairies. But, by all calculations, the steamboat dock at the trail's end on Lake of the Woods was in the United States. The dock may have been a convenience, an oversight, or a provocation, but it was a bone of contention. The days were growing short, the nights cold. To hell with Thompson, said Major F.U. Farquhar, chief astronomer for the United States. He arbitrarily chose a likely-looking piece of dry land, put up a marker, and ordered his crew to cut a line due south to the forty-ninth parallel.

Farquhar was stopped in his tracks by a huge, black-bearded, beetle-browed member of the Manitoba legislature, James McKay. McKay, a multilingual Métis guide, interpreter, and trader, brokered a deal with the Ojibway: an old chief led the astronomers to an overgrown spot on the shore where, under more than two feet of water, they found the remains of a crib of charred, hand-hewn oak logs. Farquhar, examining their squared indentations in the mud, accepted the site as monument No. 1, and his British counterpart, Captain Samuel Anderson, agreed. Measurements taken at the site indicated that the lake's most northwestern point was almost exactly where Tiarks had located it at the end of the inlet.

But Canadian commissioner Cameron refused to accept the evidence. To the irritation of the Americans, Cameron insisted on referring the boundary question to Ottawa and the British foreign office. Cameron gleefully reported back to them that the monument site was inconclusive, and "irregularities" in the boundary line at the upper reaches of Angle Inlet – one hectare of United States marsh was stranded in Canada – "may afford a convenient opportunity for inviting the government of the United States to reconsider the course of the boundary."

Commissioner Cameron had warned that the isolated Angle would become a dangerous haven for "smugglers and refugees from justice," and sure enough, during Prohibition, gun-toting smugglers and moonshiners with names like Dakota Red did a roaring liquor trade across this helpful pucker in the longest undefended border in the world.

The Northwest Angle had become a comedy of errors: Britain and the United States agreed that the area was worthless, but both were loath to relinquish it. In February 1875, the British ambassador to Washington, Edward Thornton, suggested to U.S. Secretary of State Hamilton Fish that they eliminate the awkward Angle as an "international convenience." Fish replied that the American people would never agree unless Britain made "very great sacrifices." Thornton, as instructed, offered $25,000. Fish answered: "Nothing that Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to offer would be accepted by the United States." As Minnesota historian William Lass explains: "Fish, and other government leaders at that time, who had matured at the height of the era of Manifest Destiny, believed the greatness of their country was based on vast land holdings. To surrender even a small tract was unthinkable."

The absurd boundary was duly drawn. Cameron had warned that the isolated Angle would become a dangerous haven for "smugglers and refugees from justice," and sure enough, during Prohibition, gun-toting smugglers and moonshiners with names like Dakota Red did a roaring liquor trade across this helpful pucker in the longest undefended border in the world. The Ontario Provincial Police didn't have a boat on the lake until 1949, and surveillance is still sporadic; one OPP officer describes the lake boundary as "a free-for-all." The Angle's fishing camp operators find Minnesota's fishing laws and regulations such a nuisance they once proposed, in jest, to secede from Minnesota and join Canada. Canada has won one round: in 1925 the United States gave up its hectare of bog on upper Angle Inlet, the only surrender of American land in U.S. history.

Heather Robertson writes from King City, Ontario. Her book *Magical, Mysterious Lake of the Woods*, an illustrated history written with Melinda McCracken, will be published by Heartland in August. Heather has been a summer camper in the Lake of the Woods area all her life.

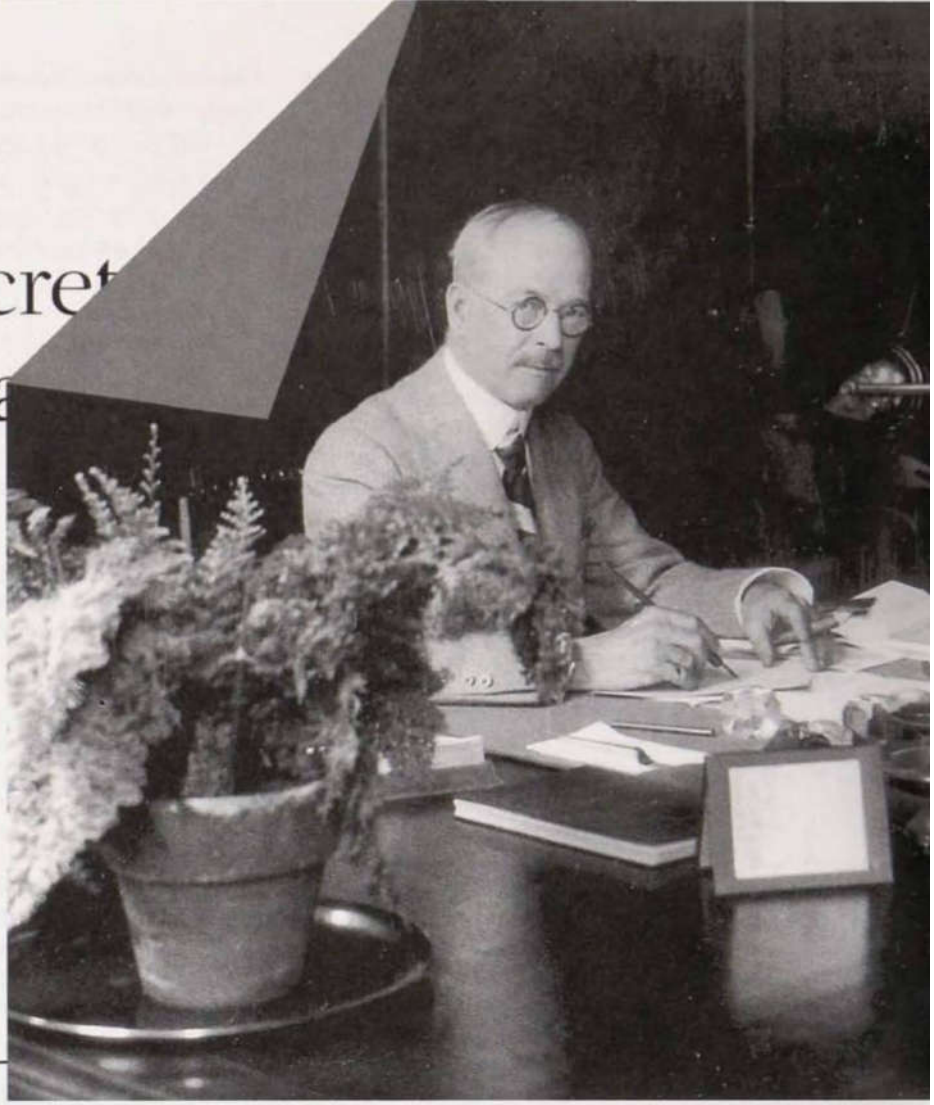
et cetera

Minnesota's Boundary with Canada: Its Evolution Since 1783 **by William E. Lass. Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1980.**

A current view of Angle Inlet at Lake of the Woods can be seen through the Flag Island webcam at <www.yahooey.com/new2/dockcamera.htm>.

The Secret Life of a **Public Man**

by Daniel Francis



Who remembers Louis Taylor, the longest-serving mayor of Vancouver? Few in Vancouver do. Daniel Francis examines Taylor's life and times and speculates on why history has neglected him.

Louis Denison Taylor is Vancouver's longest serving mayor. In a municipal political career spanning four decades (1902–1936), he won election ten times – nine times as mayor – and served a total of eleven years as chief magistrate. What's more, he lost more often than he won. In all, Taylor contested twenty-six civic elections for a variety of positions before finally retiring at the age of eighty-one.

Taylor championed women's suffrage, a juvenile court, tax reform, and the eight-hour workday, as well as civic improvements such as Vancouver's first airport, the first planning commission, and the city archives. These are accomplishments worth boasting about. Yet, despite his impressive résumé, Taylor is mostly forgotten. There is no monument with his name on it, no biography or statue. The only landmarks are a short street at the edge of Chinatown and a dilapidated hikers' cabin in the alpine meadows of Garibaldi Park. When I was growing up in the city, I did not hear his name mentioned once. If I ask old-timers about him today, the most **they** can recall is the red tie that he always wore. In his later years he lived in near destitution, dependent on the charity of friends.

How did a local politician who was so prominent for so long fall victim so

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Louis Taylor at his desk, circa 1925.

Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1857, Taylor arrived in Vancouver in 1896, fleeing the prospect of criminal charges in the U.S., though he claimed to be interested in prospecting in Alaska. He never reached the north. He worked for the CPR in B.C.'s interior for two years, then moved to Vancouver to work in newspapers. Between 1902 and 1938, he ran in twenty-six elections and won ten. He was mayor of Vancouver nine times, making him the city's longest-serving mayor.

quickly to historical neglect? This was the question that initially stimulated my interest in Taylor. To put it another way, who does "history" remember and who forget, and why?

The basic details of Taylor's life turned out to be surprisingly difficult to determine. He arrived in Vancouver from Chicago in 1896 at thirty-nine years of age. Before that his life was pretty much a blank. My search for information began more than a decade ago and led me to his family. I knew that he had had two sons who lived as adults in California, and I managed to track down the death certificate of one of them. This document was signed by a witness named Mary Werbel. Hoping this might be the deceased's daughter – that is, Louis Taylor's granddaughter – I wrote to the California department of motor vehicles requesting her address, but the department would not give out the information. Discouraged that I was able to find out so little about Taylor's private life, I put the project aside and went on with other things.

Eight years passed. Then one evening the telephone rang, and a voice at the end of the line identified himself as Roy Werbel calling from California. His mother Mary, by then deceased herself, was indeed Louis Taylor's granddaughter. Unknown to me, the motor vehicles office had forwarded my letter to her. She had not been interested in my project, but Roy was. By any chance had any personal papers survived, I asked? Sure, about twenty boxes' worth in my attic, Roy replied. And with this dramatic news, Louis Taylor received a second life.

When I went down to California to sift through the material, I discovered that the twenty boxes contained a mass of dusty newspaper clippings, mementos, scrapbooks, photographs, and, most importantly, family correspondence. Thanks to these contents, and the stories Roy told me about his great-grandfather, I went from knowing almost nothing about Taylor's early years to knowing enough to fill a soap opera. Bigamy, embezzlement, drug abuse. It turns out that Louis Taylor is not only Vancouver's longest-serving mayor but also by far the city's most colourful.

One would think that such a scandalous career would have assured Taylor a permanent place in the public memory. But outside the family, no one knew the true version of events. While he was alive, Taylor made up an alternative life story for public consumption.* Vancouver electors had no way of knowing that the man they kept reelecting mayor was a fugitive from justice with a criminal record and, at one point, two wives.

The first thing I wanted to find out was why Taylor had come to Vancouver in 1896. He was, after all, a middle-aged, married man with a new child on the way and a supposedly successful business career. Why had he given it all up to start over in a new country with hardly a penny to his name? Throughout his life, Taylor claimed that he was on his way to the Klondike goldfields when he stopped off in Vancouver almost by accident and decided to stay. Perhaps. But what he left out of this version of events was the fact that he was wanted by the police back in Chicago and that his decision to go adventuring in Canada was hardly voluntary.

It was Roy Werbel who first hinted at the story. According to family lore, he told me there were "some discrepancies" at the Chicago bank where Taylor was a partner in the summer of 1896. When the bank failed and police arrived at his home to question him, said Roy, Taylor hid behind a dressmaker's dummy in the attic, then fled to Canada.

*Taylor related his life story in a long series of articles that appeared in the *Vancouver Province* between February 28 and March 16, 1939. In effect, this series is his "memoirs," though it is highly unreliable.

VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY / 12601

Mayor Taylor throws the first ball at a cricket match in Stanley Park, May 1, 1926.

Sure enough, in the pages of the Chicago *Tribune* I found an account of Taylor's last days in the United States. His bank, North & Taylor, was forced to close when it could not meet payments to its creditors, and angry depositors gathered on the sidewalk outside demanding their money back. North, who may have been the real culprit, fled to Mexico, leaving Taylor to face the music. After a night in jail, Taylor was released on bail pending charges of embezzlement. He protested his innocence and tried to find money to repay the depositors, but with more charges looming he must have decided that Canada looked more appealing than the inside of a jail cell.

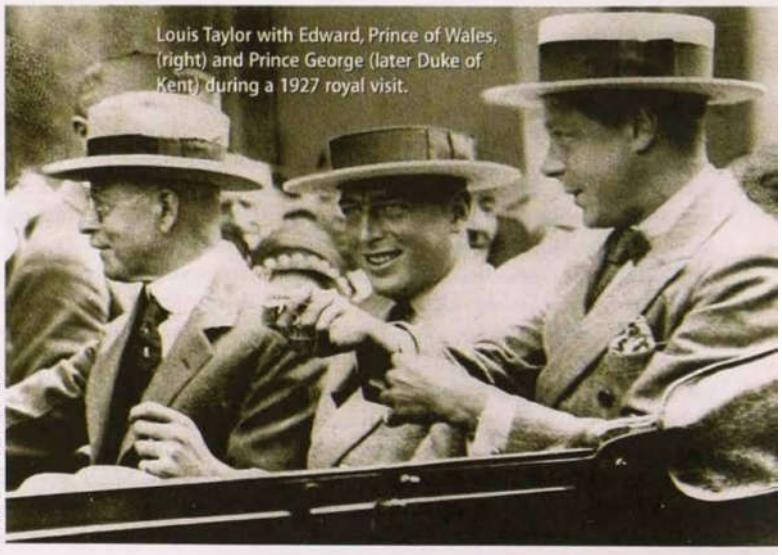
When Taylor arrived in Vancouver he was essentially in hiding. He wrote to members of his family protesting his innocence and complaining about the incessant rain and the lack of job opportunities in his new home. At first he asked them to write back to an assumed name, worried that he might be deported if the authorities located him, but gradually he became less paranoid and settled into making a new life for himself in the city. Taylor was a talented, energetic, ambitious person who did not let past setbacks sour his optimistic disposition. "Things are bound to take a turn my way soon," he wrote his family. "Anyhow I am rich in friends." Before too long he was working as an executive for the *Daily Province* newspaper, and in 1905 he purchased his own daily paper, *The World*, which he published for ten years.

But Taylor was too restless to be satisfied with one job. In 1902, after less than six years in the city, he contested his first election, a successful bid for licence commissioner, a minor official responsible for issues of gambling and liquor control. For the next thirty-five years, with the exception of a six-year hiatus he took from politics when he reached his early sixties, there was hardly a civic election that did not include Taylor as a candidate.

Early in his political career, Taylor acquired a reputation as a leftist. In 1900 he played a role in the formation of the Vancouver Labour Party, and when he was elected mayor for the first time in 1910 he headed a city council that expanded the vote for women and introduced the eight-hour day for civic employees. "I am in thorough sympathy with the man who earns his living with his hands," he told a journalist. Taylor also championed the single tax, a notion made popular by the American reformer Henry George. According to single-taxers, the cause of economic inequality was private ownership of land, and one way to close the gap between rich and poor was to replace all taxes with a single tax on land as a means of controlling speculation and appropriating excess rents for the good of the community. Once he was elected, Taylor introduced tax reforms that won him international attention as the "Single Tax Mayor."

(Another of Taylor's enthusiasms was the Asiatic Exclusion League, an organization that lobbied for an end to immigration from Asia. Seen as racist today, this was a measure much favoured in the pre-World War One era by labour groups who believed that immigrant workers deflated wages.)

Although he sometimes called himself a socialist, Taylor was more of a middle-class reformer than a fire-breathing radical. As a newspaper publisher, he backed the Liberal government of Wilfrid Laurier and attacked the provincial Conservative regime of Richard McBride. For all his labour sympathies, he stopped well short of supporting genuinely radical movements like the Socialist Party of Canada or the Industrial Workers of the World, the notorious Wobblies.



VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY / 12603

Louis Taylor with Edward, Prince of Wales, (right) and Prince George (later Duke of Kent) during a 1927 royal visit.

Somewhere along the way, Taylor acquired the odour of scandal. ... Much of this reputation stemmed from the mayor's lenient attitude toward gambling and prostitution.

Actually, it was as much his private life as his public career that marked Taylor as a radical. Which brings me to the second skeleton I found rattling around in his closet. When he bolted for Canada in 1896, Taylor left behind his wife Annie, who was about to give birth to their first son. In the spring of 1901, Annie and young Ted arrived in Vancouver, and the family settled into a house on the Fairview Slopes overlooking False Creek. Whereas Taylor had become an enthusiastic booster of his new home, Annie had not. She hated the weather, made few friends, and complained that her husband neglected her in favour of his business interests and political career. Correspondence reveals that she was seriously depressed. According to the family, Annie became addicted to opium, whether at this time or later is not clear. Possibly she was prescribed the drug to treat her depression, which may have been exacerbated by the birth of a second son. Anyway, the marriage broke down, and in October 1906, Annie and the boys moved to Los Angeles where her parents were living. Whether or not the separation was meant to be permanent, she and Louis never lived together again.

With his family gone, Taylor moved into a downtown apartment building. My examination of the city directories revealed that a woman named Alice Berry was living on a different floor in the same building. Berry, a widow, was business manager at the newspaper that Taylor owned. Before long the two were sharing an apartment, then a house in the city's West End. Surprisingly, at the same time as he was mayor, Taylor was cohabiting with a woman who was not his wife. This behaviour is out of keeping with our notions of Edwardian propriety. Was it responsible, at least in part, for the reputation Taylor was acquiring among the respectable classes for being a bit of a rogue?

In 1915, shortly after being elected for a third term as mayor, Taylor wrote to his wife suggesting a divorce. She resisted at first, but on advice from other members of the family she finally agreed, and in May 1916 a decree was issued in the County of Los Angeles granting a divorce, effective in one year's time. Either Taylor did not read the fine print or he did not care because within a month of the decree he and Alice Berry wed. In other words, for nearly a year he was married to two women at the same time, another secret of his personal life that was unknown to the Vancouver electorate.

Coincident with his second marriage, Taylor took a holiday from politics. His newspaper was in debt, and early in 1915 he had had to sell it. He needed to find reliable employment and make some money. Over the next few years he more or less dropped out of the public eye, while he edited a pair of mining magazines and did some travelling. But his marriage was short-lived; Alice died in November 1919 at the age of forty-eight. Single again, Taylor was bitten once more by the election bug. It took several tries, but in 1925 he won his fourth term as mayor. He would go on to win reelection four more times, leading Vancouver through both the prosperous years of the Twenties and the worst years of the Depression.

YES MR MAYOR!! I'M RIGHT WITH YOU! I TELL YOU WE WILL MAKE THIS CITY THE LARGEST.. YESSIR WE'LL MAKE IT THE BIGGEST YOU BET WE WILL, YOU BET YESSIR, I TELL YOU!! WE'LL MAKE THIS CITY ... YESSIR!
EXACTLY, PRECISELY! YOU HAVE THE IDEA! YOU EXPRESS MY IDEAS WONDERFULLY, IF WE STAND BEHIND ONE ANOTHER WE WILL .....
NOT SUBJECT TO GOV'T CONTROL
PUBLIC SPIRIT

A 1925 cartoon in the Vancouver *Daily Province* by J.B. Fitzmaurice satirizing Taylor's plans to amalgamate Vancouver with the suburbs of South Vancouver and Point Grey, a change that finally took place in 1929 and made Vancouver Canada's third most populous city.

The second half of Taylor's long political career was marked by significant achievements. In 1926, he appointed the first town planning commission and hired experts to prepare the city's first comprehensive plan. He had long proposed the amalgamation of Vancouver with the suburbs of South Vancouver and Point Grey, a change that occurred on January 1, 1929, instantly making Vancouver the city with the third-largest population in Canada. In 1931, he officiated at the opening of an airport on Sea Island, another of his pet projects. During the Depression, the city became "the Mecca for the unemployed,"

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Taylor (top row, centre) performing another mayoral duty – appearing with pageant contestants at the 1928 Jantzen Knitting Mills Bathing Beauty Contest at English Bay.

but Taylor managed the deteriorating economic situation at least well enough that Vancouver, unlike its neighbouring municipalities of North Vancouver and Burnaby, avoided going bankrupt. The violent sit-ins and strikes that convulsed the city in the mid-1930s occurred after he left office.

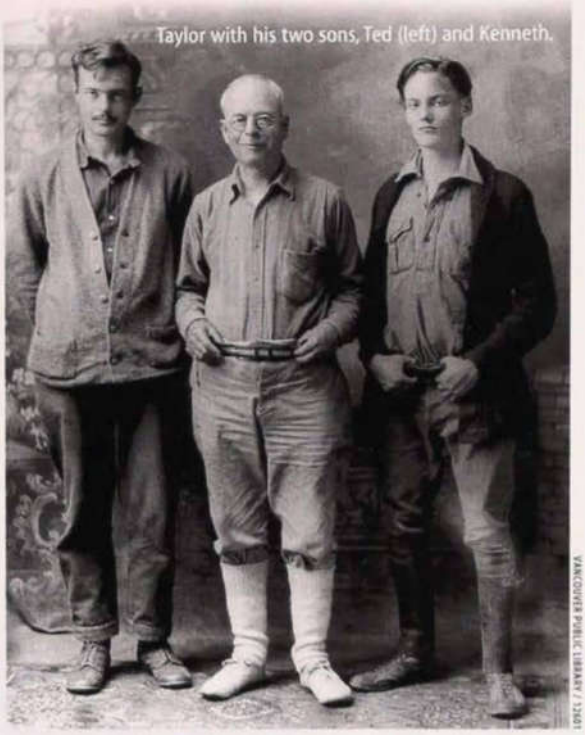
But somewhere along the way, Taylor acquired the odour of scandal. As Alan Morley wrote in his history of the city, *From Milltown to Metropolis*, Taylor had "a reputation for deep and sometimes unscrupulous intrigue." Much of this reputation stemmed from the mayor's lenient attitude toward gambling and prostitution. Although he was a devout Congregationalist, Taylor was no puritan. In an interview recorded many years later, Nora Hendrix, a black woman (grandmother of legendary rocker Jimi Hendrix) who lived in the city's downtown East Side, recalled that "everybody liked Mayor Taylor 'cause he was one of those kind of plain men." By which she meant someone who didn't try to impose middle-class morality on the city's rougher elements. Taylor believed it was preferable to have prostitution localized in an informal red-light district than to have street walkers and brothels all over town. He often said that he was not elected "to run a Sunday school." He wanted police to concentrate less on what are sometimes called victimless crimes – prostitution, gambling in the dens of Chinatown, bootlegging in the joints in the notorious east-side hangout known as Hogan's Alley, what he considered to be the harmless vices of the working person – and more on serious, violent crime.

This tolerance for "immorality" got Taylor in hot water with the city's respectable elements who periodically launched reform movements to clean up the city. They accused the mayor of being soft on vice and in league with local mobsters. Matters came to a head in 1928 when Alderman T.W. Fletcher claimed that police were being bribed to ignore criminal activity and that they were doing so on direct instructions from the mayor. A public inquiry by lawyer R.S. Lennie heard from ninety-eight witnesses during 180 hours of hearings. In the end Lennie concluded that, while the police force had serious deficiencies, there was no evidence that Taylor was receiving kickbacks. In fact, one senior RCMP officer testified: "I find that Vancouver as a seaport town is one of the cleanest seaports that I have ever been in, so far as crime, serious crime, is concerned."

Despite the findings of the Lennie investigation, the controversy probably cost Taylor the mayor's chair, at least temporarily. Two months after the report came out, he lost his bid for reelection to wholesale grocer W.H. Malkin, who had the support of the Christian Vigilance League. At this point most other seventy-one-year-old men would have retired, but not Taylor. First of all he embarked on an around-the-world trip. Then, back in B.C., he took a summer excursion down the Parsnip River with one of his sons. Their boat overturned in the rapids, and Taylor was swept half a kilometre downstream before someone fished him out of the freezing water. None the worse for his near-death experience, he returned to Vancouver and managed to get himself reelected mayor for two more terms.

Many people, including many police officers and magistrates with frontline knowledge of the issue, agreed with Taylor that attempts to eradicate social "evils" such as gambling and prostitution were unrealistic and a poor use of limited police resources. Still, during the 1934 election, the morality issue resurfaced. Taylor's opponent, Gerry McGeer, campaigned vigorously on an anticorruption platform. McGeer claimed that senior civic and police officials were consorting with known criminals and accepting bribes to allow pimps and gamblers to operate freely in the city. "You can tell those thugs that

His political career lasted four decades ... yet even his longevity worked against him. He began to be seen as the dinner guest who just wouldn't go home.


Taylor with his two sons, Ted (left) and Kenneth.

VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY / 12421

Gerry is coming," he thundered, "and if they know what's good for them, they'll get out of town."

These charges, combined with widespread unemployment and an overdrawn civic treasury, swept Taylor from power for the final time. McGeer outpolled his septuagenarian opponent almost four to one. Taylor never won another election, though he remained an indefatigable campaigner. Sixteen months before his death, when he was eighty-six years old, he issued a press release announcing that he was going to run in the next British election as a candidate for the World-Wide Political Party, an obscure group dedicated to bringing world peace by doing away with political partisanship. That campaign came to nothing. Meanwhile he had fallen into the poverty that marked his final years, living in a small apartment, dependent on an allowance of twenty-five dollars a month provided by a group of well-wishers.

Taylor died in 1946 at the age of eighty-eight. According to his wishes, he was buried wearing a red tie. Faint praise characterized his obituaries. He was "never a great mayor," said a begrudging editorial in *The Province*, merely "competent" and "enterprising"—in other words, good at getting reelected. Soon, complete obscurity replaced even this condescension.

I suppose not many mayors, when their terms expire, are remembered for very long. Still, Taylor's record was impressive. Even though he was middle-aged before he arrived in Vancouver, his political career in the city lasted four decades, far longer than any other civic politician. Yet even his longevity worked against him. He began to be seen as the dinner guest who just wouldn't go home. His experience began to seem like shrewdness; his grasp on office suggested connections of the wrong kind.

Taylor accomplished much, but he offended many. The blue bloods and bluenoses never liked the feisty "workers' friend" who fought for tax reform and the eight-hour day and was unafraid to call himself a socialist. The city elites thought that their slight, bespectacled, Chaplinesque mayor was an embarrassing lightweight. Worse, they thought he was soft on crime and in league with the city's gangsters. Then, as now, the downtown East Side was another world, not often visited by "respectable" men and women. They were suspicious that Taylor seemed to know his way around there so well. I wonder, too, if his open liaison of several years with an unmarried woman did not contribute to a reputation for corruption.

How does history sort out the good, the bad, and the merely neglected? In Vancouver, mayors most often are remembered for a single policy or event that comes to symbolize their tenure: Gerry McGeer for reading the Riot Act to unemployed protestors at Victory Square in 1935; Tom Campbell (remember "Tom Terrific"?) for the 1971 "police riot" in Gastown; Mike Harcourt for Expo 86 (even though he initially opposed it); and most recently, Philip Owen for the controversial drug policy that led to his retirement.

Corruption was the issue that clung to Louis Taylor, obscuring his accomplishments and cheapening his legacy. He was the most successful politician Vancouver has ever seen, but in the end his opponents got their revenge by portraying him as a front man for the city's underworld, the next thing to a criminal himself. And so it was less embarrassing to forget about him than to memorialize his long years of service to the city.

However, if history is arbitrary, it is also fickle. Reputations rise and fall. We are more forgiving today of personal foibles (*vide* Bill Clinton), as impatient with self-righteous moral crusaders as Taylor was himself. Vancouverites may yet find space in their history for Louis Taylor, recognizing the accuracy of the *Vancouver Sun* editorialist who wrote at his death: "L.D. served Vancouver well—better than Vancouver served him." ◘

North Vancouver writer Daniel Francis is at work on a biography of Louis Taylor.

et cetera

***Making Vancouver: Class, Status and Social Boundaries, 1863–1913*, by Robert A.J. McDonald. UBC Press, Vancouver, 1996.**

***Vancouver: An Illustrated History*, by Patricia Roy. James Lorimer & Co., Toronto, 1980.**

Recovering and making sense of the past is not just the province of professional historians. Everywhere there is a passion to unearth voices and lives that might otherwise go missing.

All Our Yesterdays

by Michael Riordon

When Vera Rosenbluth arrived at the client's home in Vancouver, the woman was already on life support, and even the nearly weightless microphone cable across her arm caused her pain. People were waiting in the next room to say their goodbyes. The nurse told Rosenbluth she had thirty minutes.

"This was pretty daunting," says Rosenbluth. "Since no one had told me why she wanted me to come, that was my first question." The woman had heard of Rosenbluth, a personal historian, through hospice contacts, and wanted her help in putting something on tape, a parting gift to her fifteen-year-old son. She had tried writing, but couldn't find the words. Perhaps it would be easier, she said, if she could talk to a friend. Before that day, the two women had never met.

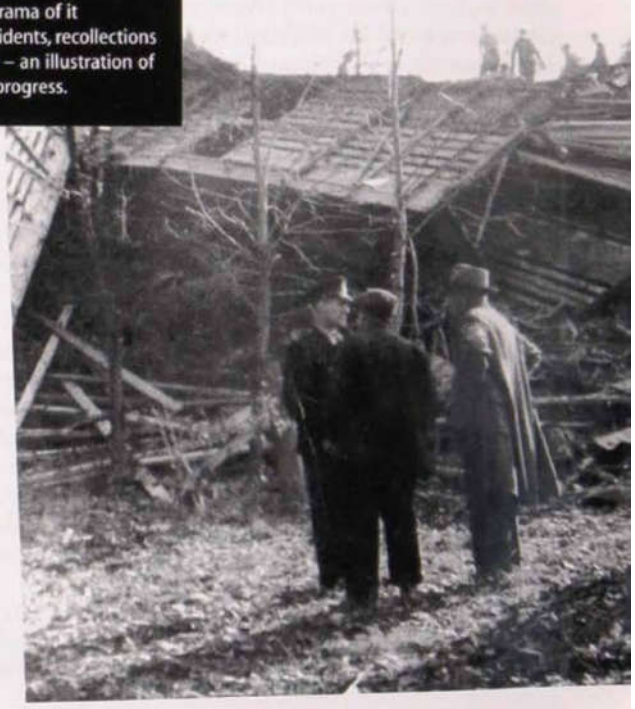
With minutes slipping away, Rosenbluth dropped her usual establishing questions about grandparents and parents and asked, "What were you like as a child?" A door opened.

She had always been painfully shy and reserved, the woman explained. She found it hard to express emotion, and had very few friends. Only when she became gravely ill had she finally begun to let down her guard, to accept love from others, and to express her own. In a strange way, she said, the cancer had been a gift. This is what she wanted to tell her son: don't wait as long as I did to let life in.

Vera Rosenbluth's work as a personal historian is a particularly intimate form of oral history, a field as ancient and richly varied as humanity. Its living roots lie in the oral traditions of aboriginal peoples, which bear not only their histories, but also their ways of understanding the world and their place in it. In a key 1997 decision on land claims in British Columbia, the Supreme Court of Canada acknowledged the unique validity of values and historical accounts conveyed by word of mouth in story and song.

Across Canada, this deep-rooted oral tradition has inspired a wide range of work, preserving and passing on life stories of individuals, communities, and whole peoples. Rather than claiming to present a single, authoritative historical account, oral historians seek to record in people's own words the many ways we recall and interpret great and small events that shape our lives.

During an oral history interview at the Billings Estate Museum in Ottawa, Vivian (Pelot) McKim told interviewer Jessica Hines: "In October 1942 there was a head-on collision of two trains at the overpass on Bank Street. Although I was only nine years old at the time, I will never

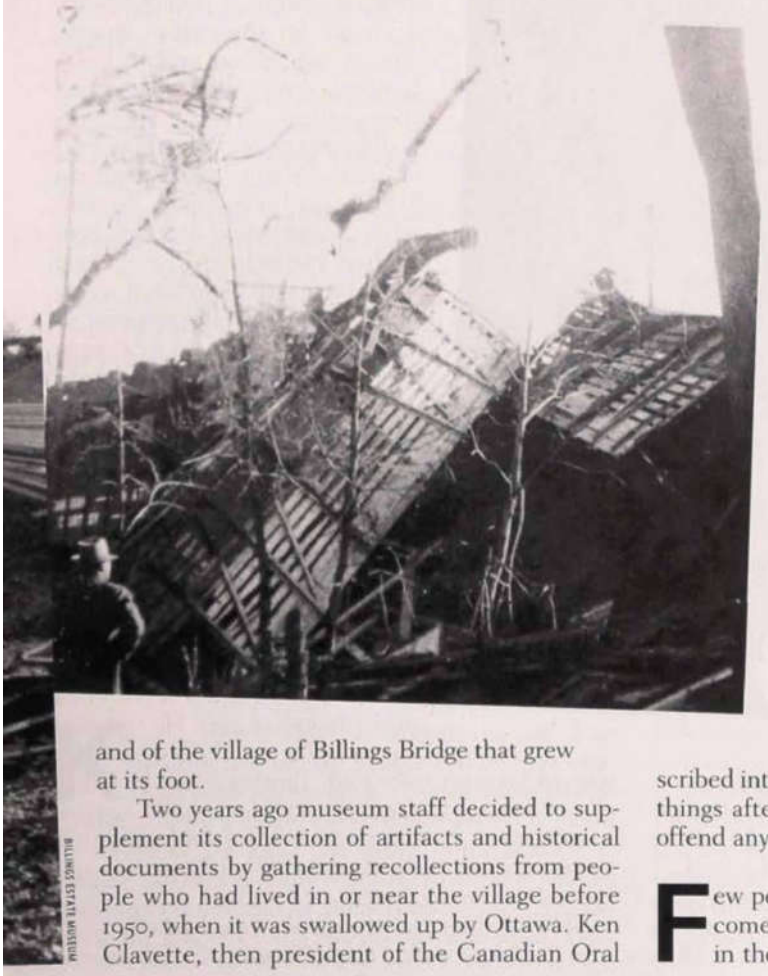


In October 1942, a train accident occurred at the Bank Street overpass in Ottawa. Though the horror and drama of it impressed many local residents, recollections elicited years later varied – an illustration of oral history as a work in progress.

forget the experience. One of the trains carried horses, and there were many dead horses scattered down the embankment. Workers were cleaning up the area, using what I remember as a very large crane. A carcass being lifted up by the crane swung outward and its blood splattered across my face. It was a very long time before I could erase the feeling of that blood from my mind."

In the course of doing interviews, Jessica Hines has heard several versions of the great train wreck. "Everyone remembers it," says Hines. "But some people say that two trains hit each other, others say there was only one train which derailed, and some say there were actually two separate train wrecks." It's a vivid illustration of how oral history works – through all the fragments we begin to discern not a fixed official version of The Past, but a composite picture of our collective story, a work in progress.

On a gentle slope above the Rideau River, the Billings Estate Museum is a handsome white clapboard manor house, built in 1828 and now engulfed in ranch-style bungalows. The house and its few acres of land, owned since 1975 by the City of Ottawa, are the last remnants of a family estate that peaked at 700 acres and of the village of Billings Bridge that grew at its foot.



BILLINGS ESTATE MUSEUM

Two years ago museum staff decided to supplement its collection of artifacts and historical documents by gathering recollections from people who had lived in or near the village before 1950, when it was swallowed up by Ottawa. Ken Clavette, then president of the Canadian Oral History Association, provided tips on how to construct and record an effective interview, and how to deal with the results. To date, Jessica Hines and her coworkers have located over ninety former residents and recorded interviews with more than forty.

As with the train wreck, Hines says that people remember Mr. Brown, or at least his demise, in different ways. Though many interviewees described Billings Bridge as a safe, friendly community in which people of varied ethnic and religious backgrounds lived together in harmony, Mr. Brown was the only black person that anyone has mentioned.

"Everyone seems to remember that this gentleman was part of the community," says Hines, "but one person said they couldn't recall whether Mr. Brown was his actual name, or was it just what people called him? Several people told us that when he died, no one knew what his religion was, or if he had one. In one version of the story, during the funeral ceremony he was half-in, half-out of the church. Another version has him buried half in one part of the cemetery, half in the other. When you hear these stories, some of them seem to have almost the quality of legends."

"Some people asked to see copies of their transcribed interviews, and they decided to change some things after the fact – they said they didn't want to offend anyone."

At twenty-four, Jessica Hines has gained some useful insights into the cleansing capacity of human memory. "Almost everyone we interviewed gave a very positive image of the village. If anything negative happened there, they avoided talking about it." There were exceptions. "Several people told us that a certain gentleman in the village had inspired many local boys growing up, but one woman said, 'Oh yes, but he was really awful to women, very insulting.'" Hines and her coworkers learned to follow up events and themes like this in other interviews, a useful technique for both corroboration and comparison. "When we asked other people about this man, they tended to avoid making any comment one way or the other. Some people asked to see copies of their transcribed interviews, and they decided to change some things after the fact – they said they didn't want to offend anyone."

Few people who do oral-history work in Canada come to it with that specific an intent. Even so, in their varied fields, nearly all are driven by a

passion to unearth voices and lives that might otherwise go missing.

Louise Livingstone works as a freelance reporter with the *Community Press*, a regional newspaper based in Stirling, eastern Ontario. Her usual beat encompasses local council meetings, openings, and school events. She wrote her first piece on Deloro in 1997. The small village is set in rocky, rolling hills to the north of Stirling, its short main street ending at a chain-link-and-barbwire fence. In a valley beyond stand the ruins of the O'Brien gold mine, smelter, refinery, and a research facility where scientists developed alloys for military use and smelting techniques for various ores, including uranium. The Moira River cuts through the valley, en route to Belleville and Lake Ontario. Trees hide from view the pools of blood-red waste on the far bank.

According to soil, water, and health-risk studies undertaken since the company abandoned the site in the mid-1960s, the area is an ecological disaster. High levels of arsenic, lead, cobalt, and radioactive waste poison the site and the village; they've also been found in the Moira River, the connecting Young's Creek, and two lakes downstream.

Louise Livingstone continues to report on each new government-sponsored study, press conference, court case, and public-liaison meeting. Along the way, she has also been gathering personal accounts from individuals who actually lived and worked at Deloro. A retired doctor told her that in the mid-1950s, significant numbers of workers on the site fell sick, and within a few months many had died of heart and lung diseases. One man who didn't want his name revealed recalls that when DDT replaced arsenic as the insecticide of choice for the cotton weevil, bags of stockpiled arsenic were dumped down the abandoned mine shafts.

"Do we really want to keep burying our past like this, and just keep the palaces and cathedrals, or do we want to find ways to tell the stories of the working men and women who created the wealth of this area?"

As a reporter for the *Community Press* in Stirling, Ontario, Louise Livingstone contributes to the record of history by collecting local stories. Her interviews with health-damaged workers of the defunct O'Brien mine and smelter in Deloro have kept alive a past that might otherwise have been buried.

The desire for anonymity isn't unusual. "Silence can become a habit," says Livingstone. "As with other contaminated sites that people have had to live with for a long time, there's an element of trying to forget. You can't live in a state of high alert all the time. People seem to feel that if the bad publicity would only stop, house prices wouldn't keep falling, and somehow the stigma of living in this nasty place would end."

John Bicknell – Bic for short – had no reservations about speaking out; on the contrary, he initiated contact with the reporter in the summer of 2001. He had read some of her articles on Deloro, and he wanted his story to be told. Turning forty, the father of two was set to enter hospital for a bone-marrow transplant, a radical treatment for leukemia that leaves survivors dependent for life on drugs that suppress the immune system.

The reporter was surprised when I asked to talk with her for an article on oral history. To her, passing

on stories like Bic's is simply a function of her role as a reporter. "That's the primary responsibility of a local press, isn't it?—to tell the local stories." Yet her account of the interview with John Bicknell is an apt description of oral history practice. "I didn't have to ask him a lot of questions," says Livingstone. "Mostly I just listened. And I didn't cut anything out of the story. Aside from some background research I did on the type of leukemia he has, it's his story, just as he told it."

Bic told Livingstone that after the Deloro site closed, it made a great all-season playground for local kids. "We played hockey on the arsenic pond in front of the labs. I remember the greenish brown ice." In summer he and his friends played on the dam holding back the red mud by the Moira River. "We would stick sticks into it and then stick our arms and feet in to push down the sticks to see how deep it was." His closest playmates at the time, two brothers now in their early forties, are also sick.

Bic recalled taking a tumble off his bike near the Galloway house. "I went face first and skinned my forehead, face, shoulder, and knees." The house has been cleared away since, says Livingstone, along with the black radioactive slag on which it was built. Fragments of slag are still embedded in Bic's forehead.

In her background research, Livingstone discovered that John Bicknell's particular form of leukemia is unusual in the thirty-to-forty age group. It results from acquired, not inherited, damage to the DNA in bone-marrow stem cells, and in studies on Japanese survivors of the atomic bomb it has been linked directly to irradiation.

Aside from her responsibility as a local storyteller, Livingstone is also compelled by the idea that people who worked, lived, and died at Deloro deserve a place in the public memory. "All that my sons learned about this area in the Ontario school system was that the Europeans came into the pristine wilderness and hewed out their farms. The First Nations didn't even register. And we had this industrial complex at Deloro that played a major role in Canadian military and technical history—but it's as if it had never been there. I've helped build a database on the workers. We already have about a thousand names. Do we really want to keep burying our past like this, and just keep the palaces and cathedrals, or do we want to find ways to tell the stories of the working men and women who created the wealth of this area?" Louise Livingstone's work is her own response.

Keeping alive stories that embody the past is an abiding passion for people forced into exile from their native lands. The Acadian past is dominated by a single cataclysmic event, *le grand dérangement*, the great unsettling. In the mid-1750s, English soldiers forcibly removed from their villages and farms thousands of French settlers in l'Acadie, along the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic coast. They were loaded onto ships at bayonet point and scattered to the south. They were not welcome in other colonies. Years, even decades, later many wandered north again to settle where they could, in small groups so as not to alarm the English, and on land that no one else wanted. Since most had no title to any land, *déracinement*—uprooting—became a defining experience for many generations of Acadians.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, the yearning for liberation that swept through many parts of the world found expression among Acadians in struggles for linguistic, educational, and political rights. In that turbulent climate the Centre d'études acadiennes opened at the Université de Moncton in 1968, and its folklore section two years later. The section gathers and preserves Acadian folktales, songs, legends, customs, folk knowledge (on such things as weather, planting, fishing, and medicine), some material artifacts, and oral histories.

When Ronald Labelle started working at the centre in 1979, he was twenty-four. He came from away, from north of Montreal, and with a degree in ethnology from l'Université de Laval in Quebec. Through the fresh eyes of an outsider, he began to notice a certain tendency to mythologize Acadian history and customs, not unusual in minority groups pushed to the margins of a dominant culture. "You often find this idea in the writings and music that Acadians have always been a very close, tight-knit community. In actual fact, there has been lots of rivalry between families and small communities—the mythical view tends to gloss over these divisions and conflicts, and it's only by looking much closer that you start to get a more realistic picture."

"The mythical view tends to gloss over divisions and conflicts … it's only by looking much closer that you start to get a more realistic picture."

Labelle now manages the folklore section at the centre. He regards oral history as an ideal tool for searching out fine details of the real picture, a stance reflected in his work both as folklorist and as editor of the Canadian Oral History Association's journal, *Oral History Forum*. "I believe you can learn a lot about a culture by looking closely at how it's lived by individuals, how they interpret the culture and help shape it with their own ideas and personal history. After I started collecting folk songs from a man in the Miramichi region of New Brunswick—he's half Acadian and half Irish, and he has a huge repertoire of folk songs and stories—I ended up fascinated by his own life history."

Allan Kelly's story became the focus of Labelle's Ph.D. thesis, and now he's weaving it into a book. In the autumn he travelled to the west coast of Newfoundland to interview Léon Dubé, who learned from his mother and aunt a vast store of traditional knowledge, and who tells the story of how his grand-

RENÉE MELANSON

Ronald Labelle, manager of the folklore section at the Centre d'études acadiennes and editor of *Oral History Forum*, the journal of the Canadian Oral History Association.

father left a seminary in France to board a fishing vessel en route for Newfoundland.

Gathering and preserving people's experience and knowledge defines folklore for Labelle. "This kind of knowledge is precious," he says, "and once it's gone it can't be replaced. That's why we try to collect and record as much as we can, before it's too late. You've heard the old saying—every old person that dies, it's like a library burning."

"If a person can just sit and be listened to in that way, it's amazing what can come up. ... Seeing yourself as part of something larger can give you a sense of identity, a sense of connection, of being laminated into history."

The website of the Centre d'études acadiennes is a richly textured virtual homeland. It offers historical documents, timelines, maps and photos, and audio excerpts from oral history interviews. In one of these, Denise Gauvin speaks of l'île Lamèque, where she lives in northeast New Brunswick; with its sister island Miscou, it caps the Acadian peninsula between the Baie des Chaleurs and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Says Gauvin (translated from her French), "It's a quiet place, very beautiful, and quite isolated. In winter we get a huge amount of snow, and it's not unusual to be cut off for four or five days, with no electricity. I don't think people really suffer that much, because we're accustomed to solitude. Living like that builds character. But there is very little work here. Many people—even older people—have to go west, to Alberta, to look for work."

In 1992 Denise Gauvin helped form a local group to promote the heritage of l'île Lamèque and l'Acadie. "We want to show young people that our past really matters," she says. "There's a saying here, 'If you don't know where you come from, how can you know where you're going?' So we work hard to set up events that demonstrate the need to preserve and value the old ways and stories. I've noticed that some young people tend to dismiss our efforts. But our culture is fragile. We need to make sure it doesn't just fade away."

For many oral historians this is the impulse that drives their work—taking a stand against the vast silence of mortality. Still, why do these stories matter, really?

At oral workshops she leads with students and community groups in Vancouver, Vera Rosenbluth argues that, in a fractured world, hearing each other's stories can do wonders. "It can break down all sorts of barriers by overcoming our fear of difference, our fear of the unknown. I believe that profoundly—it's a wonderful way to build bridges, and community."

Oral history may also have impact at a deeper, more personal level. Says Rosenbluth, "I've found that the more you listen, really listen with the heart, the more people will feel able to speak their truths. We don't allow ourselves time to reflect. If a person can just sit and be listened to in that way, it's amazing what can come up. We're really just specks in the great scheme of things. Seeing yourself as part of something larger can give you a sense of identity, a sense of connection, of being laminated into history. It can be very empowering to know that you're not alone. It can give you an extraordinary sense of possibility." ◘

Michael Riordon is a writer and documentary producer living in Picton, Ontario.

et cetera

Keeping Family Stories Alive: Discovering and Recording the Stories and Reflections of a Lifetime by Vera Rosenbluth. Hartley & Marks, Vancouver, 1997.

The Canadian Oral History Association offers online direction on oral history projects at <www.ncf.carleton.ca/oral-history/reference.html>.

Information on Acadian history and culture is available online at <www.francoidentitaire.ca/acadie/accu/accucadr.htm>.

mqup.ca

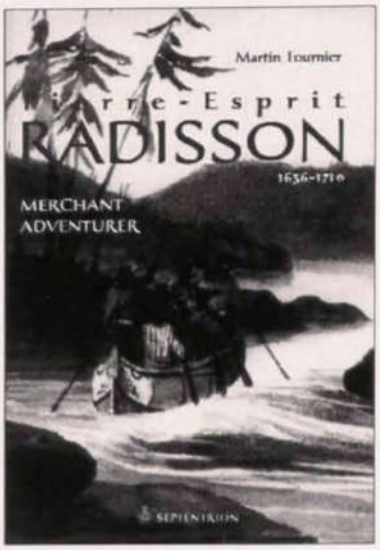
PIERRE-ESPRIT RADISSON
Merchant Adventurer, 1636-1701

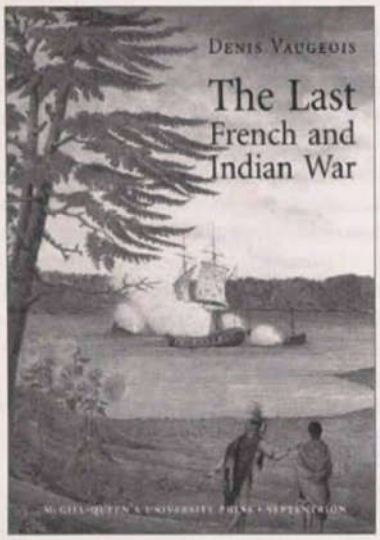
BY MARTIN FOURNIER

TRANSLATED BY MARY RICARD

CLOTH 2-89448-328-7 $49.95

When French authorities rejected his plan to reach the rich fur territories of the Hudson's Bay area, Pierre-Esprit Radisson, a French adventurer who came to New France in 1651 in search of opportunity, found ready backers and expertise for the expedition in England. Their first successful expedition of 1668-69 resulted in the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company. This accessible biography provides rich insight into Radisson's character as well as vivid accounts of his periods of captivity, guerrilla expeditions, and trading ventures among the natives.





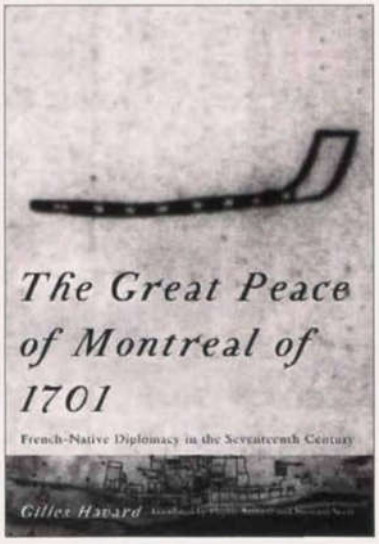
THE LAST FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

BY DENIS VAUGEOIS

TRANSLATED BY KÄTHE ROTH

CLOTH 2-89448-311-2 $39.95

In the summer of 1760, ten months after the fall of Quebec City, British forces under the command of General Amherst were converging on Montreal, which would capitulate to the British by early September. To get to Montreal Amherst managed to break the complex network of French-Native alliances on which New France relied. Vaugeois examines these events and details and how they have affected current legal disputes between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.



THE GREAT PEACE OF MONTREAL OF 1701
French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century

BY GILLES HAVARD

TRANSLATED BY PHYLLIS ARONOFF AND HOWARD SCOTT

PAPER 0-7735-2219-0 $24.95

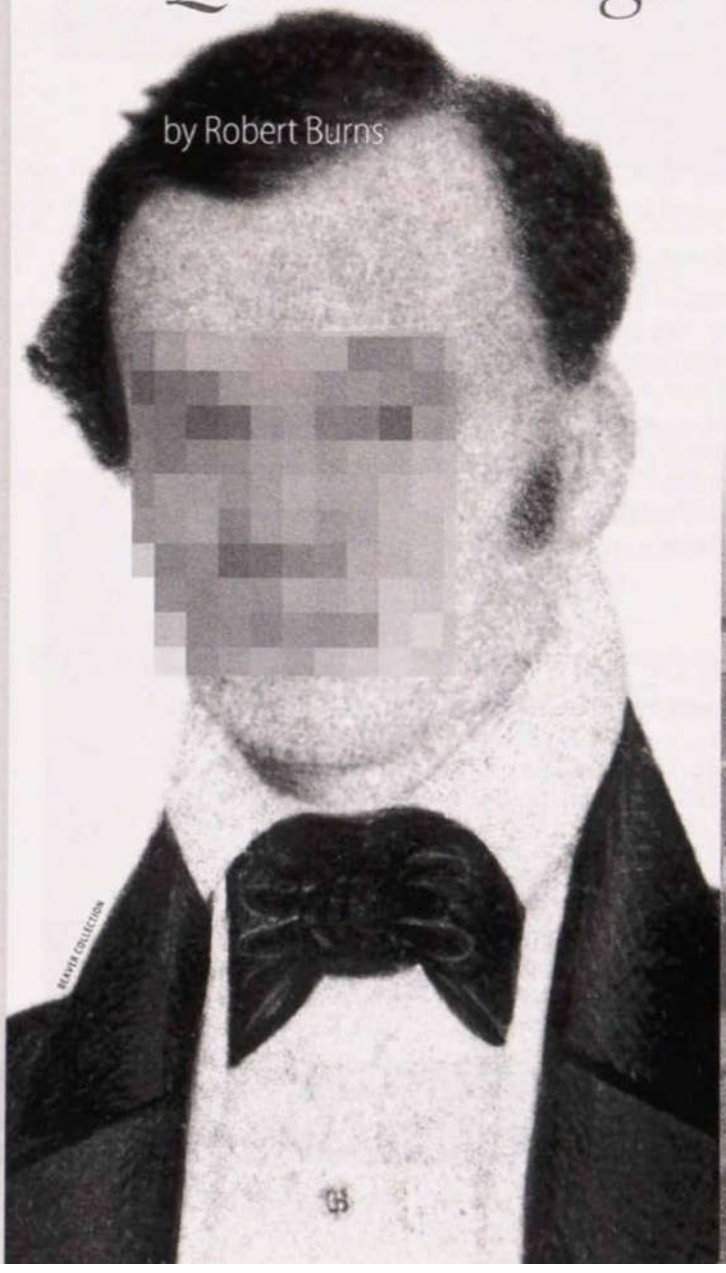
"Gilles Havard's book is a first-rate study of the factors that led to the Montreal Peace of 1701, and of the agreement itself. In fact, it is the best I have ever read and its availability in English is long overdue." *Olive Dickason, author of* ***Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times***

McGill-Queen's University Press

On August 2, 1838, a pillar of the Upper Canadian establishment appeared before the Executive Council accused of having had illicit sexual liaisons with a number of young men. What happened next offers a glimpse into attitudes toward homosexuality in nineteenth-century Canada.

"Queer Doings"

by Robert Burns

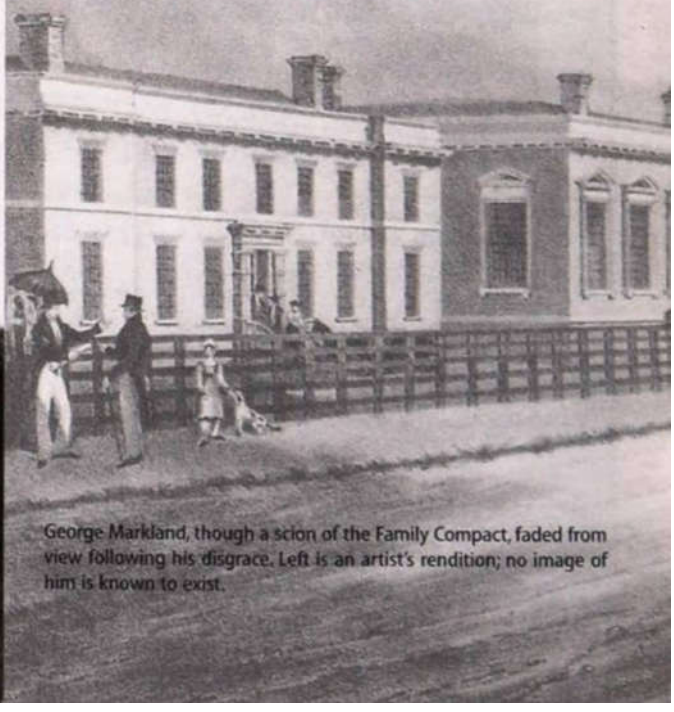


BEAVER COLLECTION

The first hint that George Markland's world was about to crumble around him came in May 1838 in the form of a letter from Margaret Powell, housekeeper to the west wing of the government building in Toronto where his office was located. She wrote in part: "Your Movements about this Building in the Evenings are watched, and have become the Subject of conjecture."

Markland brushed aside the veiled innuendo. He wrote back saying that he occasionally met a young military man in his office because he had charge of the youth's allowance. Markland had given a seemingly reasonable explanation for his conduct, but the rumours did not cease, and soon he was to regret his offhanded admission.

In May 1838, George Herchmer Markland was at the apex of his career. He held the influential position of inspector general of public accounts for Upper Canada and was a prominent member of the Executive Council of Lieutenant Governor Sir George Arthur. Born around 1790 in Kingston, Upper Canada, the son of a prosperous merchant, he was educated by Archdeacon John Strachan and briefly considered a career in the Anglican ministry before entering public service. After an electoral defeat in 1820, he was appointed to the Legislative Council. His rise to power through a series of increasingly important patronage positions was steady thereafter. He was, to all appearances, diligent and efficient – a model bureaucrat, deserving the emulation and praise of his fellow officials. One of them, future attorney general and chief justice of Upper Canada, John Beverly Robinson, had described the twenty-year-old Markland in 1810 as "a good fellow, and very friendly." But he added: "I prefer seeing a person at his age rather more manly and not quite so *feminine* either in speech or action."



George Markland, though a scion of the Family Compact, faded from view following his disgrace. Left is an artist's rendition; no image of him is known to exist.

But in May 1838, George Markland's political career and social life were about to enter eclipse. The series of events over the summer that would lead to his ultimate undoing are poorly recorded: No newspaper covered them; only veiled, brief references appear in existing letters of contemporaries. But there was an inquiry into Markland's behaviour. And there are transcripts that reveal much about society's attitudes toward homosexuality in early nineteenth-century Canada. But for them, Markland's sudden departure from public life would have remained a mystery.

In mid-June, Markland, reacting to continuing rumours, wrote to Arthur requesting that his old teacher and patron, John Strachan, be asked to form a one-man inquiry into the innuendoes regarding his behaviour. The lieutenant governor agreed, but decided the issue was sufficiently grave to warrant a review by the entire Executive Council. Early in July, Arthur received an anonymous letter urging Markland's immediate removal from office lest "an everlasting stigma of disgrace" fall upon the government. The writer also threatened to "direct a note to the Parliament soon."

Markland pleaded for time to summon witnesses from distant points in his defence. On August 1, he informed Arthur that his witness, James Pearson, "a young man of the 24th Regiment," was in Toronto. He requested that the mayor take Pearson's affidavit privately, rather than have the soldier appear in person before the Executive Council. Arthur refused. Markland also wrote a pleading letter to Arthur stressing how he, and his father before him, had striven for over half a century "to uphold the institutions of the country" and how he had worked for almost twenty years on the legislative council and nine years on the Executive Council to further those ends. He added: "It would seem that I am suspected of what I declare myself wholly incapable of even imagining, and I unhesitatingly assert my innocence, which I can prove. I can show, for ample testimony, that mine were acts of beneficence, not of wrong, that from an early period of my life, such acts have produced good, not evil."

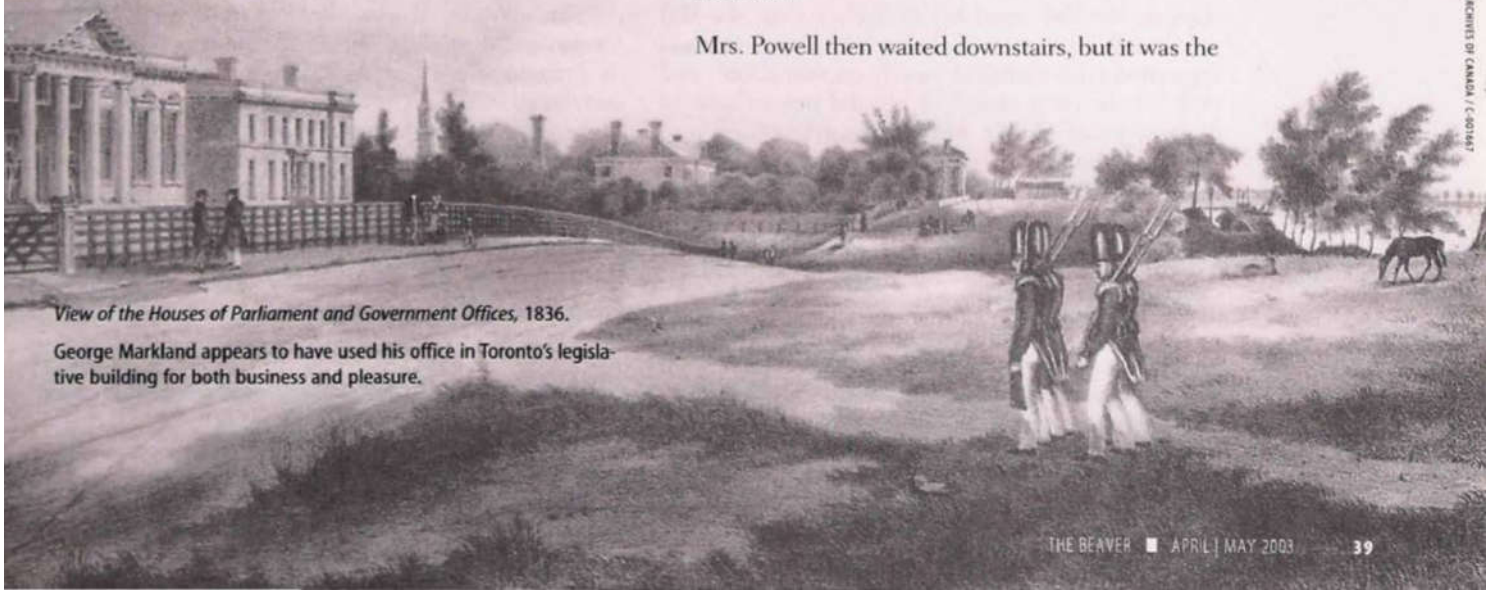
Markland stressed that he had quietly and privately helped a number of young people: "I can prove that the high and the humble have been equally objects of my beneficence, and that the occasion which has unhappily brought about all this anxiety was one equally just." Markland's effort to forestall the inquiry came to nought. Whether by accident or design, Arthur did not acknowledge receipt of the letter until three o'clock on Thursday, August 2, five hours after the inquiry had begun.

The first witness, appropriately enough, was Margaret Powell, who testified that beginning in the late winter Markland had begun frequenting the Parliament Building and his office in the evenings, often accompanied by a young army drummer. "I have seen them meet outside the building and afterwards separate—one coming to Markland's office before the other," she said.

At first Mrs. Powell did not connect their visits, "but from seeing them meet outside, afterwards separate and come separately into the House it appeared to me that an intimacy subsisted between them which I thought extraordinary considering the relative rank of the parties." On three occasions, according to Mrs. Powell, "a person in the uniform of the Band, in a white coat, came with the drummer." Finally, after this behaviour had been noted by both her servant and her young son, her curiosity got the better of her. On the evening of May 23, she went to Markland's office, but found the doors locked. She stated:

> *I heard voices inside. ... Mr. Markland was one of the persons speaking. They spoke so low that I could not distinguish a word. I could only hear the murmur of the voices. I then heard such movements as convinced me that there was a female in the room, with whom some person was in connection. I remained there seven or eight minutes. No doubt remains upon my mind as to the nature of the noise I heard: and I was sure a female was in the room.*

Mrs. Powell then waited downstairs, but it was the



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View of the Houses of Parliament and Government Offices, 1836.

George Markland appears to have used his office in Toronto's legislative building for both business and pleasure.

drummer, not a woman, who passed her "in great haste" fifteen minutes later. She did admit that she could not swear it had not been "a female in disguise."

Immediately afterwards, Markland came down the stairs, also "in great haste," and Mrs. Powell spoke to him: "Well Sir these are queer doings from the bottom to the top."

Mrs. Powell also testified that when, prior to May 23, she had mentioned Markland's peculiar evening office visits to Robert Baldwin Sullivan, another member of the Executive Council, he "made light of it and said it was all nonsense." But when Sullivan saw Markland's reply to Mrs. Powell's warning letter he decided to act. He first spoke to John Strachan as a friend of Markland, and then, finding that rumours were spreading around the city, dutifully reported the situation to the lieutenant governor. Exactly how the rumours spread, or whether they were but the rekindling of earlier stories about Markland, will probably never be known. However, it does appear that it was not so much Mrs. Powell's charges themselves, as the evidence in Markland's own handwriting that he had had young male visitors at his office after hours, that had set the inquiry into motion.

The inquiry's second witness, Hannah Pike, was Mrs. Powell's servant and helped with the chores in the Parliament Building. She corroborated much of the evidence of her mistress concerning Markland's evening visitors, including the point that he locked his office doors during such visits. She testified that she had seen a drummer from the Twenty-fourth Regiment other than the one noted by her and Mrs. Powell visiting Markland, and she added the names of two others – Henry Hughes, an eighteen-year-old labourer from Strachan's household, and her cousin, John Brown, a private in the Queen's Rangers.

Brown told the inquiry he met Markland several times. Though he commented on "the familiar manner of his walks with me and leaning on my arm," he was quick to add that Markland "never made use of improper language in my company."

Friday's first witness, Richard Hull Thornhill, first clerk in the Crown Lands Office, testified that he had gone to see Mrs. Powell at Markland's request. He had urged her to declare that "she had not actually seen anything"; that "any reports she had originated were founded merely on suspicion"; and that "all the facts stated by her did not amount to positive proof of Mr. Markland's criminality and would not be considered as doing so in a Court of Justice." (While the Executive Council had many powers of inquiry, it was not a court of law.) However, his testimony supported Mrs. Powell as a reliable witness: He said he knew her well and could not see what would motivate her to make a false accusation.

That day, Markland's witness, James Pearson, a fifer in the band of the Twenty-fourth Regiment of Foot, appeared. Though Markland intended Pearson's testimony to refute Mrs. Powell's charges, the young soldier, though sympathetic, did not perform as Markland hoped. It was clear he had no desire to share the opprobrium directed at the inspector general. Much of his testimony was ambivalent. He said he first heard of Markland from a Sergeant Jones who "had mentioned to me that Mr. Markland had expressed his willingness to purchase my discharge [from the army]."* He admitted to meeting Markland on many occasions in his office, but he said he never stayed for more than fifteen minutes, during which they discussed his desire to leave his regiment and the possibility of Markland purchasing his discharge. As to whether Markland took his arm during a walk on the wharf or locked the door during office visits, he said he could not remember. Nor could he recall if he had been in Markland's office on the evening of May 23, when Mrs. Powell allegedly heard noises. Some of his testimony actually proved harmful to Markland's case. He stated that Markland "never received any money for me and he never gave me any," which directly contradicted Markland's letter to Mrs. Powell saying he had charge of Pearson's allowance. And he also introduced a new figure, "a young man named Monaghan of the Band," for whom Markland had also offered to purchase his discharge. Pearson described him as "younger than me, he plays a clarinet in the Band. Monaghan has light brown hair. He always wore a white coat – the uniform of the Band."

There was also a discrepancy over a letter from Markland, which Pearson said he received in Bytown (Ottawa) through an intermediary, William Morrow. Pearson claimed a second letter arrived from Markland while Morrow was in Bytown that asked for the return of the first. Morrow, however, claimed there was only one letter between Pearson and Markland, delivered earlier, and he had gone to Bytown for the sole purpose of getting it back. Either Pearson or Morrow was lying under oath. If Markland's original letter contained material reflecting on his sexual preferences, Pearson would have wished to indicate he'd returned it immediately. Markland's friend Morrow, on the other hand, would have wanted to show that Pearson, by keeping the letter a long time, couldn't have felt its contents warranted its immediate return.

Saturday's last witness was law student Frederick Creighton Muttlebury, who had first met Markland in Toronto when he was eighteen. Markland had convinced him to study law in Toronto rather than become a clerk in Quebec and offered him money to do so. Though he never boarded with Markland (he boarded outside the city), he did dine with him "about three times a week" for about a year. But he broke off his relationship with the inspector general.

*British soldiers in this period were volunteers, usually from society's lower strata, and often illiterate. Each signed on for a ten-year stint, with an option to reenlist, and received in exchange for services food, lodging, clothing, and about a shilling a day stipend. In Upper Canada at this time, desertion to the United States was a chronic problem, suggesting that the benefits of army life faded before the prospects in the New World. Purchasing a discharge was a legal way of getting out of one's contract, but the cost was beyond the resources of most rank and file.

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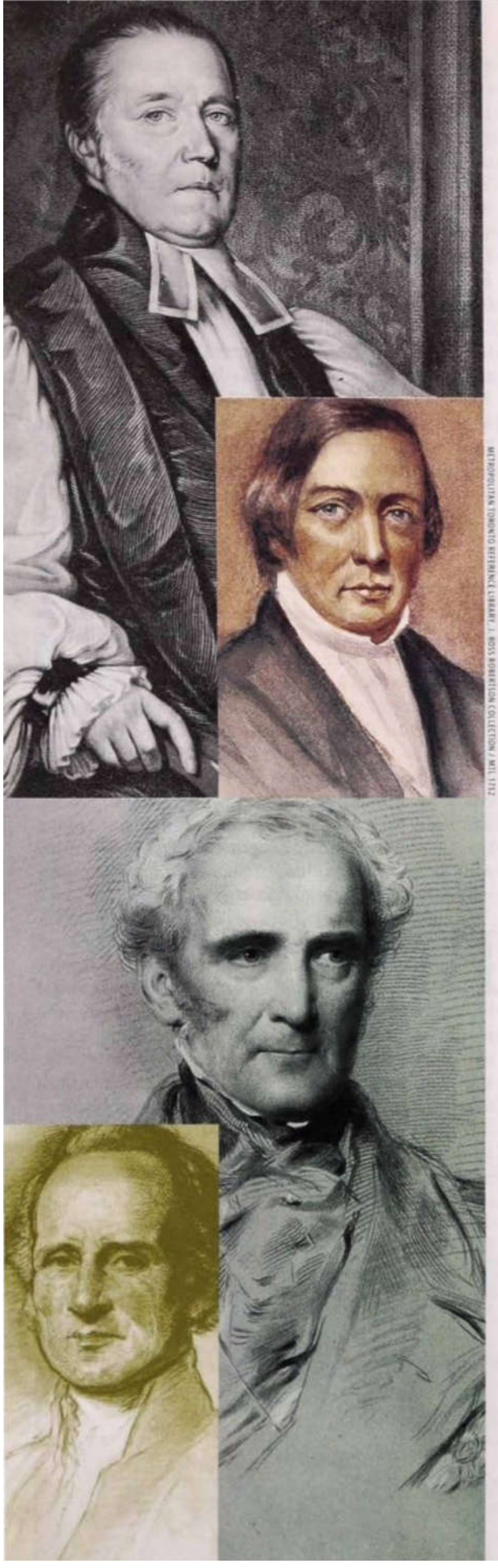


METROPOLITAN TORONTO REFERENCE LIBRARY / ROSS ROBERTSON COLLECTION / RRTL 1172

Markland, according to Muttlebury, began to look at him in a "kind of smirking way I did not like" and would hold his hand.

"On one occasion," Muttlebury testified, "I was dining with Mr. Markland alone when I was much ashamed at Mr. Markland making the following observation: 'You have the most perfect figure of any one in town. Several people have remarked it.'"

Yet, said the agile law student, excusing himself from any possible tinge of mutual guilt, he had not at the time suspected Markland of "criminal intentions." Said he: "I had scarcely any conception at the time of the possibility of a crime of the nature which afterward suggested itself to me."

But the most extraordinary aspect of Muttlebury's testimony was his statement that two years earlier he had shown improper letters he had received from Markland to the then lieutenant governor, Sir John Colborne, who was curious about why he had broken off with Markland. Colborne informed Chief Justice John Beverley Robinson of the transaction and recommended Muttlebury's mother show the letters to another member of the Executive Council. He told Muttlebury he was correct to end the relationship.

Muttlebury's final comment was that Markland "never attempted or proposed in the remotest manner anything improper or criminal to me," and added to protect himself: "if he had done so, I should not have contented myself with withdrawing from his acquaintance and protection."

Despite the ambiguity and denials, the innuendo proved damaging. On Sunday John Macaulay, Arthur's secretary, wrote to his wife: "The investigation of Mr. Markland's case is now going on. It is rumored that he cannot succeed in clearing the matter up."

Clockwise, from upper left:
John Strachan, bishop of Toronto, was Markland's teacher in Cornwall and an important figure in his life. Markland's appointment to the Legislative Council of Upper Canada was likely due to Strachan's influence. When rumours of his sexual behaviour began to spread, Markland appealed to Strachan to form a one-man inquiry. Later, after Markland was declared persona non grata, Strachan interceded to prevent a civil suit against him over misuse of college funds for the erection of Upper Canada College. In the wake of the scandal, however, Strachan kept his distance from his former protégé.

Lawyer and politician Robert Baldwin Sullivan, mayor of Toronto from 1835 to 1836, was a member of the Executive Council during the Markland affair and a close advisor to Lieutenant Governor Sir George Arthur. Though at first he dismissed the innuendo surrounding George Markland, faced with written evidence of wrongdoing, he dutifully reported to his superior, thus setting an inquiry in motion.

Sir John Colborne was appointed lieutenant governor of Upper Canada in 1828 and was recalled in 1836, a year before the Rebellion. Although likely aware of George Markland's sexual preference and activities, he took no official action against him.

Born in 1791, Sir John Beverley Robinson was a contemporary of Markland's, likewise a protégé of John Strachan and a member of the Family Compact. Appointed chief justice of Upper Canada in 1829, the appointment carried with it the presidency of the Executive Council.

On Monday, August 6, Henry Hughes, who had worked in John Strachan's household for three years, testified that he had joined Markland in his office on two evenings. He admitted "it did appear strange to me to be asked to [his] office," but added that Markland's "conversation always was relating to my affairs. ... [He] never said or proposed any thing improper to me, and he gave me good advice as to my conduct."

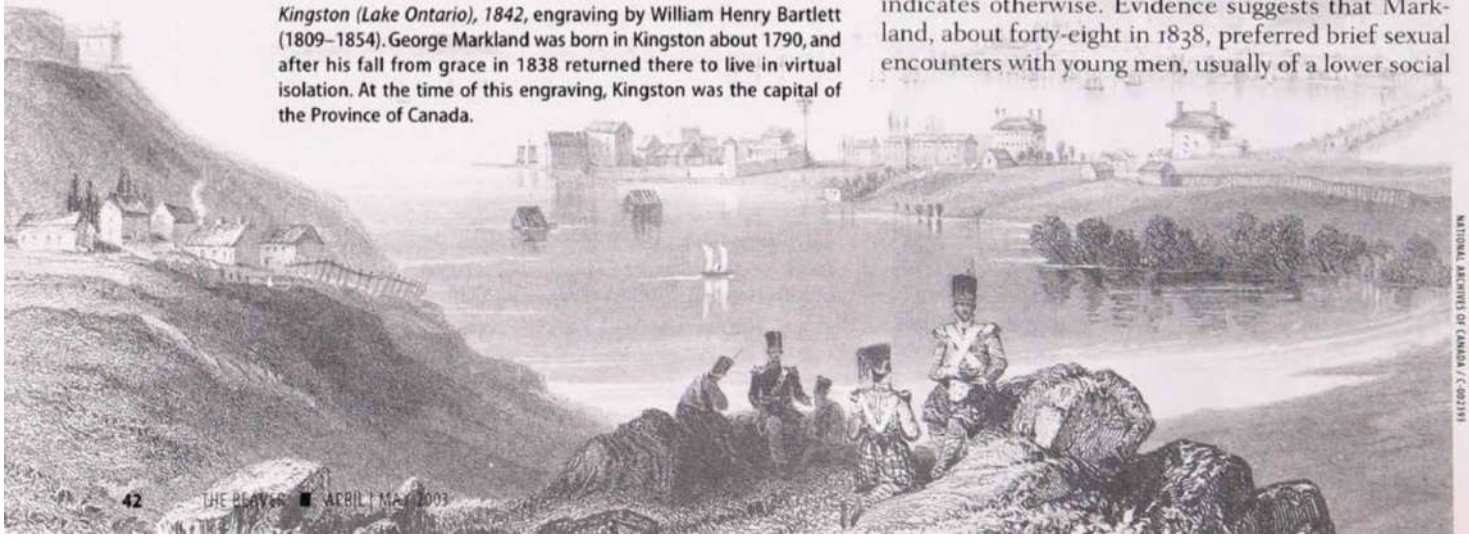
Margaret Powell returned next to testify that James Pearson was not the person she had seen visiting Markland. The man she saw wore the same uniform but was stouter and had lighter hair. Hannah Pike gave essentially the same evidence. She said she had only named Pearson because he had fit the description she had given to another member of Twenty-fourth Regiment. As the Executive Council adjourned for the day, its members must have realized that Markland had known Pearson was not the man whom Mrs. Powell and Hannah Pike claimed to have seen. It is the only logical explanation for Markland's effort to keep Pearson from appearing in person at the inquiry. Robert Baldwin Sullivan immediately wrote Markland asking for the name of the light-complexioned man that Pearson had introduced in Friday's testimony. Though his reply has not been preserved, Markland apparently corroborated Pearson's testimony. He mentioned William Monaghan as possibly fitting the description.

The only witness heard on Tuesday, August 7, and the last whose testimony is available, was a Toronto merchant, Henry Stewart, who testified that in 1835 during an evening walk with his younger brother John, "Markland ... put his hand in an indecent manner on my brother's person." The Executive Council ordered that John Stewart be requested to appear "with as little delay as possible." It then adjourned and never met again to discuss the Markland affair. John Stewart apparently did come to Toronto, for his travel expenses of £4.12.0 are listed in the council minutes some months later, but his testimony, if it was given, has not been preserved.

Nonetheless, whether Stewart's testimony was incriminating or whether the allegations proved overwhelming, Markland was presumed guilty. On August 28, his career in shambles, Markland wrote a resignation letter to Arthur's secretary. In return, the inquiry was dropped. Markland returned to Kingston to live in virtual isolation. He never again held any public office. However, his problems did not end with his virtual banishment. In 1841 a legislative committee discovered that, as treasurer of the provincial school lands fund, he was in default almost £5,000 for the period 1831–1838. He did not deny responsibility for the deficit and reimbursed the government by occasional payments and provisions in his will. He may have been guilty of no more than careless accounting, a common fault among nineteenth-century Canadian officials. In the mid-1840s, Markland barely escaped civil suit by the Council of King's College for his role in using college funds in 1831 for the erection of Upper Canada College. Strachan intervened on his behalf and convinced the council that Markland had merely been acting on the orders of Sir John Colborne.

George Markland lived on in obscurity in Kingston until his death in 1862, twenty-four years after his resignation. Much of his life remains a mystery. He was, for example, married; an obituary of his wife appeared in an 1847 newspaper. But who she was, whether they were married in 1838, or if they had children are not known. Today, only a few of Markland's letters remain, scattered in the correspondence of his friends and associates. The passing of his Family Compact peers elicited glowing eulogies from reform and conservative newspapers alike, but Markland's death was noted in the Kingston *Daily British Whig* and in the Toronto *Globe* by identical two-line obituaries. If his contemporaries attempted to forget Markland, his career, and its eclipse, they were almost completely successful.

But if little can be said with certainty about Markland as an individual, it is possible to speculate upon the views of his fellows toward homosexuality. On first glance the Markland case would seem to indicate that no clandestine homosexual community or group existed in Toronto in the 1830s, only a single lonely individual bumbling from one unhappy encounter to another. A second glance indicates otherwise. Evidence suggests that Markland, about forty-eight in 1838, preferred brief sexual encounters with young men, usually of a lower social



Kingston (Lake Ontario), 1842, **engraving by William Henry Bartlett (1809–1854). George Markland was born in Kingston about 1790, and after his fall from grace in 1838 returned there to live in virtual isolation. At the time of this engraving, Kingston was the capital of the Province of Canada.**

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class. Toronto, a colonial capital and garrison town, saw a steady stream of such young men making their mark in the world, some of whom were willing to trade sexual favours for advantage of one kind or another – often the purchase of a discharge from the British army. In this, he was aided by Sergeant Jones. If Markland was, as he claimed, merely a private patron who enjoyed helping others, then Sergeant Jones can be seen in the same light. But it does seem strange that a career soldier would actively work to deplete the forces under his command in a period of border raids out of a sense of philanthropy. If Markland was guilty of homosexual activity, then the sergeant was guilty of procuring. Markland's evening walks near the Parliament Building and the number of his encounters suggest that society in 1838 differed little, if any, from today's.

As for the witnesses, they were either antagonistic or sympathetic. The former, such as Mrs. Powell, felt simply that it was her duty to expose what she understood as his criminal behaviour. The motivation of the witnesses sympathetic to Markland was more complex. Time and again they offered bits of testimony that could be construed as incriminating, but always stressed that Markland never proposed anything improper to them as individuals. Each was torn between the desire to support Markland's claim of innocence, and the overwhelming spectre of being associated with Markland if he were found guilty. Only Henry Hughes, the ex-servant of John Strachan, unreservedly supported Markland's case. The rest made certain that if Markland fell, they would not go with him; at worst they would be viewed as having been naive and used by the inspector general. The fear of the sympathetic witnesses is almost tangible and it gives one some sense of the severity of the stigma society attached to homosexuality in Toronto in the 1830s.

The attitudes of other public figures toward Markland in particular, and toward homosexuality in general, are more difficult to assess. If, as Muttlebury testified, definite evidence of Markland's sexual proclivities was available in 1836, why did the inquiry not occur until 1838? Arthur, a career officer in the British Army, appears to have pressed Markland relentlessly, refusing his every effort to forestall or avoid the inquiry, while his predecessor, Sir John Colborne, likewise a professional soldier and aware of Markland's sexual preference, took no official action. There are two possible reasons: Between 1836 and 1838 stood the Rebellion of 1837. Arthur may have sacrificed Markland in the aftermath of the Rebellion to show the populace that the British government was as capable of punishing Tories as it had been of suppressing rebels. Arthur may also have insisted on a speedy and complete inquiry because rumours of Markland's illicit activities, contained during Colborne's tenure, were becoming widespread. This suggests that Upper Canada's high-ranking government officers didn't object as much to Markland's alleged homosexuality as they did to its becoming publicly known. In short, as long as homosexuals weren't doing it in the street and frightening the horses, then it could be tacitly ignored. John Strachan's attitude toward Markland is representative. A keen observer and shrewd judge of people, Strachan appears neither to have reacted to insinuations against his former pupil nor to have curtailed the development of a relationship between Markland and Henry Hughes. However, in the aftermath of the scandal, Strachan distanced himself from his protégé. His papers contain few references to Markland; either he or his literary executors culled his files before they were presented to the archives.

It would appear, then, that Upper Canada's educated governing class was more tolerant of homosexuality in practice than the penal code – which imposed death for sodomy – would suggest. Indeed, Markland's peers could be seen to have exhibited some mercy. He could have been turned over to the criminal courts for prosecution of a felony, but he was not. Instead, he was allowed to retire, in comfort, if in disgrace. And then to virtually disappear from history. ◘

Historian and writer Robert J. Burns lives with his wife Barbara at the Baptist Parsonage in Sparta, Ontario. He is the coauthor of *Guardians of the Wild*, a history of the warden service of Canada's national parks, published in 2000 by University of Calgary Press.

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Artifact

In the dark days of the Great Depression, concern over urban poverty spurred members of one philanthropic organization in Montreal – the Canadian Progress Club – to bring relief to the growing numbers of malnourished children in the city. In 1932, they started the Milk Fund, which – in concert with the Catholic School Board of Montreal, local Catholic charities, the City of Montreal, and six area dairies – delivered subsidized milk (at three cents a pint) to all school children and provided free milk to children of families on social assistance who were at least 10 percent below the average weight for their height according to the standards of the day. The Milk Fund's generosity also supported similar programs in other city schools.

Children received milk in pint bottles made of glass like this one with Guaranteed Pure Milk Co. Limited in raised letters on the front and the date 1933 on the bottom. In this instance, to support the work of the Milk Fund, the bottle was converted into a donation box with a metal lid secured by a brass lock.

The modified milk bottle bears witness to the deprivation of the Depression and its terrible effects on children. But it also highlights the importance of community solidarity, the work of volunteers and the not-for-profit sector in difficult times, and the ways milk entered the social history of Montreal and other Canadian cities.

More examples of the production, delivery, and consumption of milk are on display in the exhibit *Milk and the City: The Montreal Experience*, which runs at Montreal's Écomusée du fier monde until September 8, 2003.

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Reviews

Featured Books

■ **Firewater: The Impact of the Whisky Trade on the Blackfoot Nation**
by Hugh A. Dempsey
Fifth House Publishers, Calgary, Alberta, 2002
256 pp., illus., $24.95 paper

■ **The Halifax Explosion and the Royal Canadian Navy: Inquiry and Intrigue**
by John Griffith Armstrong
UBC Press, Vancouver, 2002
248 pp., illus., $39.95 hardcover

■ **The Making of Billy Bishop**
by Brereton Greenhous
Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2002
220 pp., illus., $29.99 hardcover

Over .08

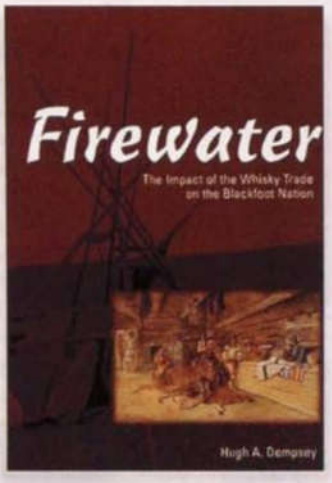
Between 1831 and 1865, the American Fur Company wrested most of the Blackfoot trade from the Hudson's Bay Company. After the U.S. Civil War though, the owners of the AFC sold their operations on the Upper Missouri, creating a commercial vacuum in northern Montana. Soon, a group of whisky traders stepped into the void, wreaking havoc among the Blackfoot of northern Montana. In 1869, as American law enforcement grew more effective after the legal chaos of the immediate post-Civil War years, some of these traders moved north, beyond the reach of American law, into the British possessions. Then, until 1874 when the North-West Mounted Police arrived, whisky traders operated with impunity in what is now southern Alberta. ***Firewater*** offers a detailed exposition of the history of this whisky trade. The author of this book, Hugh Dempsey, has published many books on the Blackfoot and Cree, including biographies of Crowfoot, Red Crow, and Big Bear. Although this book lacks a clear interpretive focus, in it Dempsey offers us a rich, detailed, well-told history of the whisky trade.

No one knows more about the history of the whisky trade, or about the context in which it took place, than Hugh Dempsey. In *Firewater*, he relies on knowledge, evidence, and archival photographs gathered during decades of research, including intensive new research carried out in the past few years. Dempsey draws evidence from a breathtakingly deep and broad range of sources. He appears to have left no stone unturned.

The whisky trade, as recounted in *Firewater*, is not simply the story of irredeemable villains preying upon helpless victims. Rather than indulge in excessive moralizing, Dempsey allows the evidence to tell the tragic story. The whisky trade developed because of a constellation of forces and personalities, and was allowed to flourish thanks to incompetence, ignorance, parsimony, and graft within the U.S. and Canadian governments. Meanwhile, the aftermath of the Civil War in Montana Territory, including ineffective law enforcement, uncoop-

erative judges and juries, and rivalries between Republicans and Democrats, prevented an effective response to the trade. Commercial rivalries in Fort Benton may have led a reluctant I.G. Baker to become one of the traders' main suppliers. The presence of the Hudson's Bay Company, missionaries, and wolfers, each pursuing a combination of self-interest and higher interests, complicated the picture. Most fascinating, however, are the portraits of the main participants: the traders and the Blackfoot.

Firewater reveals the traders to be a varied lot, not merely stereotypical degenerates. Most of these men married Blackfoot women; some went on to take on respectable, even prominent roles in Canadian and American society. Why did men, who appeared to behave so decently before and afterwards, behave so reprehensibly during those years? There is no easy answer to the question. The traders may have reflected the temper of their times. The whisky trade, after all, took place during the decades when hundreds of thousands of young men, many of them hardened veterans of the Mexican-American war and the Civil War, streamed from one gold rush to the next in hopes of striking it rich – some by finding gold, others by different means. Having risked so much, and now free of many of the constraints of their societies, many of them sought their riches at all costs. Regrets perhaps, could be assuaged later.



As for the Blackfoot, Dempsey shows that they traded amazingly peacefully with traders, even at the cost of incredible violence and suffering within their own communities. Dempsey struggles to explain why the Blackfoot did this although the evidence may never be sufficient to explain fully their motivations.

In sum, *Firewater* does not offer a dramatically new interpretation of the whisky trade, but it combines well-written text with fine illustrations to produce a truly remarkable exposition of an important story. It is Dempsey's best book so far.

Reviewed by **Theodore Binnema**, a historian at the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George.

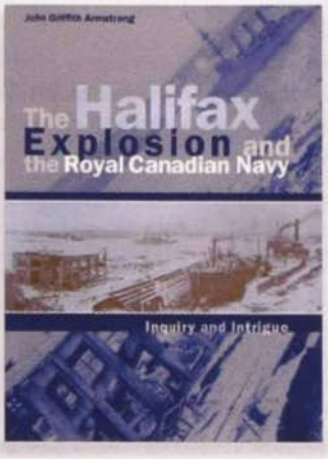
Da bomb

Disasters – natural and otherwise – can linger long in the consciousness of a locality, a region, and even a nation. Initial devastation horrifies, the search for causes fascinates, and the fallout – which often dissolves into finger pointing – resonates, all combining to transform horrendous events from a single terrible moment into an enduring part of history. The Halifax Explosion of 1917 is perhaps the best Canadian example, and in an important new book, ***The Halifax Explosion and the Royal Canadian Navy: Inquiry and Intrigue***, historian John Griffith Armstrong investigates the role of a critical and heretofore largely ignored actor – the Royal Canadian Navy – in that terrible event and the subsequent search for blame. The result is fresh, readable history that will have to be among the first sources consulted in serious research into the subject.

The events of December 6, 1917 are familiar. The French munition ship *Mont Blanc* and the Norwegian transport *Imo* collided south of the Narrows in Halifax harbour – at a point between where the two bridges now span the harbour – sparking the most powerful man-made explosion to that point in history. Sixteen hundred inhabitants of Halifax and Dartmouth died, and another 8,000 were wounded. A massive international relief effort followed to bring succour to the some 20,000 people suddenly rendered homeless, many from Halifax's shattered north side. The search for culprits began immediately, and fingers were quickly pointed at the Royal Canadian Navy. In the judicial inquiry that ensued, the immature service – just seven years old – was vilified, with some lasting effect to its reputation in the city that was its Atlantic home. Armstrong's grandfather, a RCN sailor, was disabled in the explosion, and what began as a quest into his experience evolved into the first scholarly account that considers the navy's role at the epicentre of events.

Through an examination based upon rigorous research into heretofore untapped archival sources, Armstrong, in a tight, accessible style, describes the fledging navy and details its important role in controlling ships' movements in the busy wartime port. Then, in a methodology reminiscent of the popular chronicler Walter Lord, he describes ship by ship, virtually sailor by sailor, how the December 6 blast ripped through the ships and men in the navy dockyard, including those who went to *Mont Blanc*'s aid, unsuspecting of her volatile cargo. The important role of the 1,000 sailors who joined in the relief effort, and the role of senior officers in guiding it is also put into new perspective.

Most fascinating though is Armstrong's handling of the judicial inquiry that followed remarkably soon – seven days – after the event. The subtitle, *Inquiry and Intrigue*, is well chosen, and some will be reminded of the Somalia Inquiry of the late 1990s. To be sure there were no TV lights in December 1917 Halifax, but the flamboyant lawyers, ravenous media, squirming witnesses, and insatiable public are all present, and



wonderfully portrayed by the author. Attention quickly focused on who allowed *Mont Blanc* into the busy harbour in the first place, and blame soon settled on the RCN examination officer, Commander Frederick Wyatt, who was responsible for the movement of shipping in and out of the wartime port. When the scrutiny increased past the level of comfort due to sensational reporting by some of the local press, Wyatt's superiors – bureaucrats and politicians – dismayed by his handling of questions, abandoned him to his fate. Armstrong's use of evidence is strong, for example, using billing records to determine how Crown counsel was reacting to testimony throughout the inquiry. In the end, although Crown counsel considered Wyatt and the navy blameless, many considered them responsible for the events that led to the calamity, seriously harming the service's reputation.

That is why *The Halifax Explosion and the Royal Canadian Navy* is such good history. Not only are readers led down important new avenues off well-beaten paths, but they learn of the wider context of the events and of the people who shaped them. Armstrong gives the tragic events of December 1917 an important new perspective, and for that reason his work deserves wide appeal.

Reviewed by **Michael Whitby**, a senior naval historian at the Department of National Defence.

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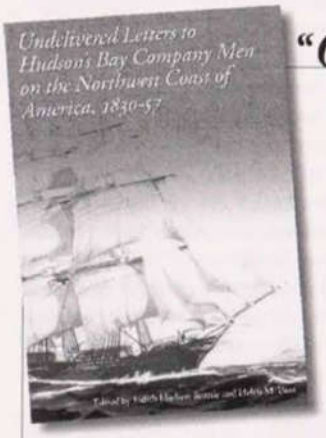

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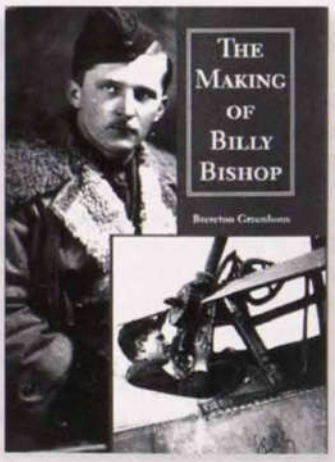
Brave Flyer, Bold Liar

A storm of controversy has once more engulfed one of Canada's legends, and it has been generated by Brereton Greenhous's book, ***The Making of Billy Bishop***. This becomes clear early in the book when Greenhous characterizes Bishop as "a brave flyer – and a consummate, bold liar." First of all, some will see this as an assault on the character of a man who is one of Canada's greatest war heroes. Billy Bishop, a young knight of the air in the First World War, was officially credited with seventy-two aerial



victories. This made him the highest scoring ace in the British Empire, and a star player in what was seen by many then, and now, as the game of war. Secondly, Greenhous attacks the way in which we make our heroes in Western countries, another topic that has caused great indignation in various circles.

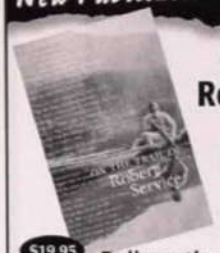
This book focuses on Bishop's

career as a fighter pilot on the Western Front, from March 1917 to June 1918, during some of the most intense aerial fighting of the war. However, Greenhous's portrayal of Bishop highlights character flaws that the author believes partially explain how Bishop became, or was made into, a false hero because he did not perform all the brave deeds that caused him to become one of the greatest celebrities of his day. While Greenhous admits that "his courage was never in doubt," he concludes that Bishop was a "distinguished fraud." This assertion is based largely on what Greenhous contends was Bishop's increasing tendency to lie in his career, culminating in his systematic exaggeration or falsification of his combat reports, sometimes abetted by his superiors.

Many of Greenhous's critics accuse him of not using any new facts to arrive at his conclusions. In the narrowest sense this may be true, but Greenhous has brought together in one place a unique set of sources from which he draws his own inferences. Furthermore, Greenhous has attempted to assess the veracity of the documentary evidence in a way that goes beyond what previous writers have done. In so doing, he reminds us that not everything that is written down can be taken at face value, and that context is crucial to interpreting written sources. Context is also a key element in his examination of the process by which we make our heroes. Greenhous shows us the political process behind the award of Bishop's Victoria Cross. When Bishop received his award many in Britain feared the war would be lost. Morale was sagging, heroes were needed, and Bishop fit the bill perfectly.

Greenhous's most vociferous detractors have claimed that since Bishop is counted among Canada's great heroes, he should not be criticized because this is somehow unpatriotic. Greenhous's account of Bishop, while not entirely balanced, nevertheless shows Bishop as a man with a mixture of human traits – courage, vanity, charm, deceit, determination – among others. In addition, Bishop was in the right place at the right time, a key but often undervalued factor in the making of heroes. But this should not

New Publication Announcement



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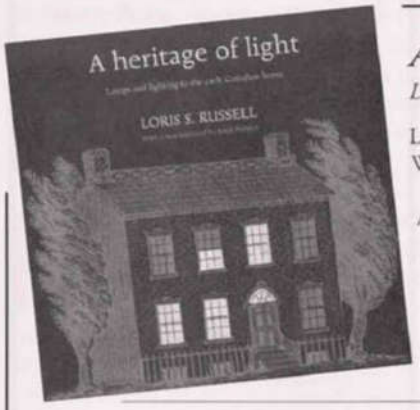

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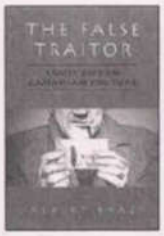

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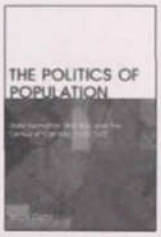

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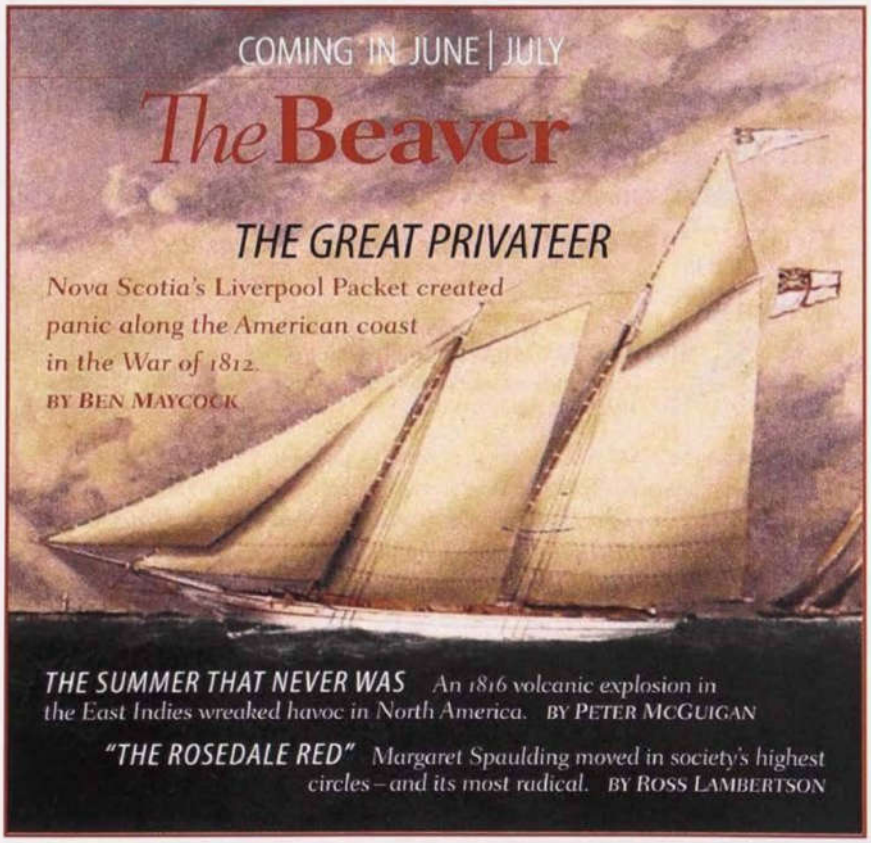
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detract from his heroism. Greenhous admits that Bishop "was a hero," and he describes the virtues and flaws of Bishop and the people around him. Greenhous's critics too often focus on the flaws that he depicts in these people, and perhaps he is overly negative, but a careful reading of this book will see that Greenhous does not paint one-dimensional, good or bad characters. They are all complex people struggling through one of the greatest crises in the twentieth century. Even if we do not agree with all his character sketches, at least Greenhous has not given us cardboard cutout heroes at whose feet we are asked to worship.

Some will be upset that Greenhous has challenged some widely held assumptions about one of Canada's legendary heroes. But that is the historian's job. *The Making of Billy Bishop* will offer more grist for the mills of professional historians, and will also be of interest to anyone who enjoys reading Canadian military history.

Reviewed by **Allan English**, who teaches history at Queen's University, Kingston, and is a Senior Research Fellow at the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute.

More Books

- *Hockey's Home, Halifax-Dartmouth: The Origin of Canada's Game*. By Martin Jones.

  While highway signs proclaim Windsor, Nova Scotia, as the birthplace of hockey, Dartmouth lawyer Martin Jones assembles much evidence that hockey was born thirty-five kilometres down the road in Halifax-Dartmouth, which had, in his estimation, the right set of circumstances and people, notably garrisoned British troops who played a variety of stick-and-ball games on ice. Amply illustrated, this book also delves into the evolution of the hockey stick, goals, the rules of the game, and play among Nova Scotian women and African Canadians. Is it the last word on hockey's place of origin? Probably not, but it presents a convincing argument.

  Nimbus Publishing, Halifax, 2002. 118 pp., $18.95 paper.

- *First Drafts: Eyewitness Accounts from Canada's Past*. By J.L. Granatstein & Norman Hillmer.

  This compendium of more than 250 first-person accounts presents a distinctive journalistic view of the country's history, from the Viking landings to the 2002 Olympics. And while subjects are covered by many acclaimed journalists – Mair, Dafoe, Halton, Berton, Gzowski, Blatchford, and a poignant account of "The Concentration Camps" by war correspondent René Lévesque – it is the nontraditional reports that

fascinate, from such contributors as explorer Jacques Cartier, fugitive slave Thomas Hedgebeth, Lady Aberdeen, and opium smoker Emily Wharton. Fascinating, but frustrating, too – where and when accounts first appeared is essential context; readers must decipher a crowded copyright page to glean information that could easily have accompanied the text.

Thomas Allen Publishers, Toronto, 2002. 486 pp., $36.95 hardcover.

■ *Canuck Chicks and Maple Leaf Mamas: Women of the Great White North*. By Ann Douglas.

This is history lite, but for all that, well-sourced – a tally of female accomplishment north of the forty-ninth parallel over the last two centuries in politics, business, medicine, sport, and entertainment, from "all round gutsy broad" Laura Secord to "smart and savvy" Sheila Copps. Written largely in book-of-lists fashion, author Ann Douglas has mined innumerable books, magazines, and newspapers for her gems of information, focusing on landmark moments in the lives of Canadian women. Patriarchy gets its usual comeuppance, but the tone is breezy, and it's all in fun.

McArthur & Company, Toronto, 2002. 236 pp., $19.95 paper.

■ *Banker, Builder, Blockade Runner: A Victorian Embezzler & His Circle*. By Pat Lotz.

James Forman was a respectable banker with friends in the highest circles of Halifax society until he was accused of embezzling $300,000 from the Bank of Nova Scotia – a scandal that pushed the Franco-Prussian war off the front pages of local papers. Despite the publicity, however, little trace of Forman, the man, remained on record. Author Pat Lotz, who stumbled over the story when she purchased a rental flat in Forman's Georgian mansion Thorndean, turned detective to produce this elegant book, rooting through archives and rooting out descendants to fill in the blanks. With Forman as the common thread, the book draws together biographies of key Haligonians of the day to paint a compelling portrait of a vibrant Victorian society.

Gaspereau Press, Kentville, Nova Scotia, 2002. 231 pp., $25.95 paper.

■ *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963–1968*. By Greg Donaghy.

When the United States says "jump," Canada usually says "how high?" In the 1960s, however, while both Canadian nationalism and anti-Vietnam War sentiment grew, Canada appeared to be reconsidering just how high it would jump to accommodate its immense neighbour: Lester Pearson dared to question American bombing in Vietnam, and Lyndon Johnson tore a strip off him for doing so. Despite the apparent acrimony symbolized by this exchange, the relationship between Canada and the U.S. during this tumultuous period, historian Greg Donaghy argues, was a fruitful one. Mutually beneficial trade arrangements were negotiated and each side tolerated the other's foreign policy objectives without impairing their friendship.

McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal & Kingston, 2002. 235 pp., $75.00 hardcover.

Moment

April 7, 1868: The assassination of Thomas D'Arcy McGee

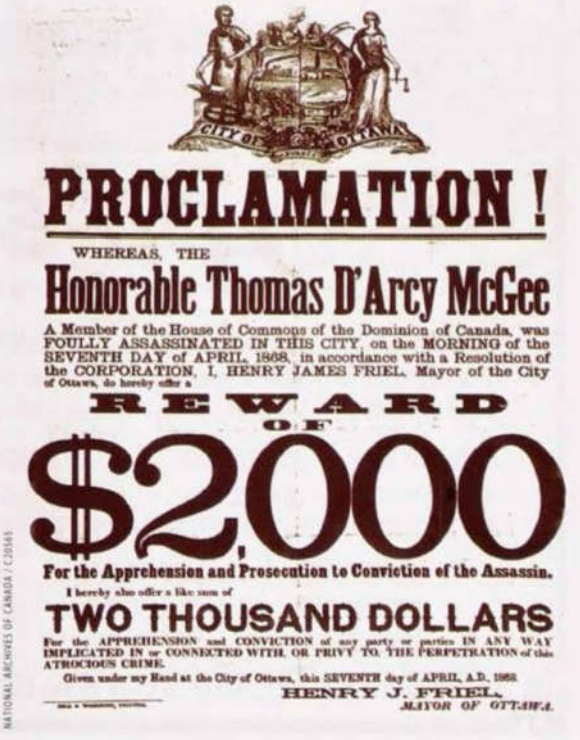
Ottawa: 2:30 A.M. on a chilly, moonlit night in early spring in 1868. A shot disturbs the silence. A woman cries out and the lights go on at Mrs. Trotter's boarding house. Lying on his back in the doorway is Thomas D'Arcy McGee, member of Parliament and Father of Confederation. Blood oozes from a fatal wound in his head. His still-smoking cigar lays by the doorstep.

McGee had been shot from behind just as he was about to enter Trotter's boarding house on Sparks Street, where he stayed while Parliament sat. The bullet entered the back of his neck and came out the front of his mouth, shattering his false teeth and spraying their pieces into the front hallway. Blood splattered the door and a large pool of it lay underneath his body. His keys were still in the lock.

The death of McGee caused a sensation in the newly formed confederation of Canada. Speculations ran wild about who had done it and why. Many blamed the Fenians (also known as the Irish Republican Brotherhood) whom McGee had publicly denounced.

Thomas D'Arcy McGee was born in Carlingford County, Ireland, in 1825, and emigrated to the United States in 1842. As editor of the *Boston Pilot* (and later New York's *The Nation*), McGee urged his readers to protest British rule in Ireland and support that nation's struggle for independence. However, he was also interested in the issues and struggles of his new home. McGee had experienced firsthand the difficulties immigrants faced in America. Forced into filthy ghettos with limited job opportunities, many turned to crime to feed their families. McGee spoke out for immigrant rights in America, but was unable to make any improvements. Discontented, he turned to Canada. Having visited the country a few times in the 1850s he found it surprisingly tolerant: "To the American citizen who boasts of greater liberty in the States, I say that a man can state his private, social, political and religious opinions with more freedom here than in New York or New England. There is, besides, far more liberty and toleration enjoyed by minorities in Canada than in the United States."

McGee's political views had under-


CITY OF OTTAWA
PROCLAMATION !
WHEREAS, THE
Honorable Thomas D'Arcy McGee
A Member of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, was FOULLY ASSASSINATED IN THIS CITY, on the MORNING of the SEVENTH DAY of APRIL, 1868, in accordance with a Resolution of the CORPORATION, I, HENRY JAMES FRIEL, Mayor of the City of Ottawa, do hereby offer a
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$2,000
For the Apprehension and Prosecution to Conviction of the Assassin.
I hereby also offer a like sum of
TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS
For the APPREHENSION and CONVICTION of any party or parties IN ANY WAY IMPLICATED IN or CONNECTED WITH, OR PRIVY TO, THE PERPETRATION of this ATROCIOUS CRIME.
Given under my Hand at the City of Ottawa, this SEVENTH day of APRIL, A.D. 1868
HENRY J. FRIEL,
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gone a turnaround since his Irish rebel days. He felt the reason for Canada's success in balancing authority and personal freedom was, ironically, its strong link with Britain and its parliamentary system. Believing it superior to the American republican system, he began urging immigrants to choose Canada over America.

In 1857, at the invitation of its Irish community, McGee moved to Montreal and was soon elected to the Legislative Assembly. In his first speech, March 3, 1858, McGee spoke on a number of issues: Catholic separate schools (for); free trade (against); and the opening of the Canadian West (under Canada's rule, not the Hudson's Bay Company's); he even had the audacity to criticize John A. Macdonald for his affiliation with the Orange Lodges. His flair with words caught the attention of many. The Toronto *Globe* wrote after his debut: "McGee undoubtedly is the most finished orator in the House. ... We liked his pluck."

As a Reformer and later an independent, McGee supported the expansion of Canada and called for a clearly articulated immigration policy. As an incentive to immigrants, he proposed a "social state" that would ensure education, jobs, and familial support. Such government aid wouldn't be limited to immigrants, either. As minister of agriculture, McGee introduced a policy of guaranteed assistance in times of disaster and proposed a similar policy for fishermen. McGee saw Canada's wealth not in her material resources, but in her people.

By the 1860s, McGee had reached the pinnacle of his political career and planned to serve Canada's developing nationalism by writing literature and history. But his assassination at the age of forty-three would cut short these plans, and his idea of a social state, radical for its day, was forgotten. Who can estimate the loss to Canadian literature and history?

Patrick James Whelan, an Irish immigrant and suspected Fenian, was charged with McGee's murder. He was found guilty and publicly hanged February 11, 1869, the last public execution in Canada. To his dying hour, Whelan proclaimed his innocence.

—Sarah Burton

ALLAN LEVINE

Encounter

Winnipeg writer Allan Levine admires the ability of Minnie Woods to have kept the customer – and the authorities – satisfied.

There were no red lights on the house at 157 Rachel Street in the North Winnipeg neighbourhood of Point Douglas. Nor was it a Paris bordello. This was despite the best intentions and designs of its celebrated owner, Madam Minnie Woods, otherwise known as "Queen of the Harlots."

Male visitors to Madam Woods's – circa 1910 – were, I imagine, first led into the parlour, decorated by gaudy tapestries and velvet drapes over the windows. They were offered a drink of cheap whisky, and then Minnie introduced them to her dozen or so lovely women, ready to serve their every whim and desire. The main "activity" in the house took place in the back in one of the seven dimly lit rooms. In each there was a pitcher of water, a bar of soap, a white towel, a stock of rubber sheaths (ten cents extra), and a single bed with clean sheets. Satisfaction cost two dollars, but for five there were all sorts of offerings.

Let me be completely honest: I have never visited a brothel, nor met a real-life madam. Yet of all the colourful characters I have encountered in my research on early twentieth-century Winnipeg, Madam Minnie Woods is one of the most interesting and alluring. She was a woman who had contacts in the police department and at city hall, and probably knew more secrets than anyone on the Prairies.

Winnipeg before the First World War was a booming frontier metropolis, and its leading citizens were deliriously optimistic about its potential and future. Minnie Woods embodied – albeit slightly differently than such luminaries of the commercial elite as James Ashdown and Augustus Nanton – the entrepreneurial spirit that epitomized the city's pioneers. She was privy to the secrets of high and low. Who better, then, to sit down with in order to learn what truly transpired from the hallowed trading floor of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange to the dark and musty saloons on Main Street than the Queen of the Harlots?

Given the transient nature of the profession, biographical information on Minnie Woods is scarce. She was about thirty when she arrived in the city around 1900 from the United States and immediately went into business establishing her first brothel on Thomas Street (now Minto Street). As that western section of the city became more populated, Woods and her fellow madams were driven out. The city's chief of police in 1909, John McRae, realized that that he would never permanently solve the prostitution problem and concluded that segregation was the answer. He sent for Minnie Woods and, after lengthy negotiations, it was decided that the new red-light district would be in Point Douglas on Rachel (now Annabella) and McFarlane Streets. Neither Minnie nor the chief bothered to ask the residents already living in the neighbourhood what they thought about this idea.

Within days, a real estate agent named John Beaman, apparently on a tip from Chief McRae, bought up many of the inexpensive houses on the two streets. He then proceeded to sell them back to Woods and her friends for steep prices. By most accounts, Beaman was reported to have made a profit of $70,000* on these transactions. (There is no evidence to suggest that McRae received a kickback.)

As a madam, Minnie Woods was not a harsh taskmaster. She hired private detectives to take care of troublemakers and insisted that her girls regularly see a physician. She did not keep any women against their will. Most of them entered the business out of a desire to make four times what they could earn working as a domestic or seamstress. Woods also followed the various strict rules and regulations about proper decorum and behaviour established by Chief McRae. "I always try to conduct my house as near right as possible," Woods told the 1911 Royal Commission on Vice in Winnipeg.

Minnie Woods was not a harsh taskmaster. She hired private detectives to take care of troublemakers and insisted that her girls regularly see a physician.

Minnie Woods was no saint, of course. There were incidents of violence and abuse in Winnipeg's red-light district. But as Queen of the Harlots she lived in Point Douglas long after the other madams had left. She celebrated three decades in the brothel business and certainly must have had enough stories about the old days to entertain even the most offended moral reformer.

*The equivalent of more than $1.1 million today.

Allan Levine is the author of eight books, including *The Bolshevik's Revenge*, the third in the Sam Klein historical mystery series, published in November 2002.

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Home Delivery

The History Society is planning a series of public lectures in the coming months to provide *Beaver* readers and friends of the Society with an opportunity to meet the people who work to bring our history to life – in literature, on radio and television, and in our communities. These events, currently scheduled for Montreal, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Calgary, will also provide an opportunity for *Beaver* readers to meet the editorial team and talk to Society staff about our programs. Society members will receive a special invitation to events organized in their area. To request events in your community, or for more information about the program schedule, please contact the society at 1-800-816-6777 or via email <info@historysociety.ca>.

Membership has *more* Privileges

The History Society is pleased to welcome two new partners to its Museums Discount Program – the Bata Shoe Museum and the Royal Ontario Museum, both in Toronto.

The Bata Shoe Museum gives you the boot – and other foot apparel through the ages. It first opened in 1993, but moved to its current home on Bloor Street, designed by Raymond Moriyama, in 1995. Its unique exhibits show what it must have been like to walk – or hobble – in the footsteps of our ancestors and the big, or odd, or colourful shoes they left us to fill.

The Royal Ontario Museum joins us as it begins its Renaissance ROM transformation, an ambitious, multiyear make-over. Committed to remaining open for business during construction, the ROM will offer two new exhibits this fall: Peter Rabbit's Garden and an international art deco retrospective from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

We're in the process of recruiting more museum partners and will announce them as they join.

COURTESY THE BATA SHOE MUSEUM / PHOTO RON WOOD

Wayne Gretzky's skate (left), used at the time he was drafted to the Edmonton Oilers. It will be featured in "Starstruck," an exhibition opening at The Bata Shoe Museum on March 6th.

The motto beside the main doors (below) proclaims the Royal Ontario Museum to be both a natural history museum and a museum of art and archaeology.

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

You Got Mail??

During the last half of last year, our readers received an unusually high volume of mail from the History Society, more than would normally be the case. Many of you received a variety of duplicate, overlapping, or incorrect mailings. Confusion reigned and calls came to the office for clarification. We apologized. We explained that the root cause was our recent, one-time switch to a new database (which initially seemed to produce more bugs than benefits). We also suggested to callers ways they could reduce the mail we send them, if that's their choice. It's advice worth sharing with all of our readers.

The Society typically reminds readers of subscription renewals through a series of notices. If you'd prefer to avoid them, save a few trees, and a few dollars for the Society, you can choose one of the following options at any time:

- Specify an annual single invoice for your renewal rather than several reminders, or
- Renew online, by visiting <www.thebeaver.ca>.

From time to time, the Society offers its subscription list to outside organizations. It's a source of income for us. *Beaver* readers can be removed from any third-party mailing lists by simply contacting the Society office by phone, mail, or email.

And finally, once a year, the History Society makes a direct appeal to its readers for an additional charitable contribution. The results can be seen in the enclosed Honour Roll. *Beaver* readers generously provided $174,000 in 2002 and accounted for 17 per cent of all contributions received by the Society last year. We are very grateful for this support. These gifts are an important source of revenue, enabling us to further expand our publishing initiatives, as well as support our Awards programs and efforts to encourage local history societies across Canada. You can notify the Society at any time to be excluded from these mailings as well.

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- Pointe à Callière, Musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Montréal
- Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, QC
- New Brunswick Museum, Saint John
- Yarmouth County Museum, Yarmouth, NS

A discount of at least 10 percent on regular admission will be given upon presentation of your membership card. Some restrictions may apply. All subscribers to the *Beaver* are automatically members of the Society.

CHRISTOPHER **Moore**

Redressing History's Horrors

How do we handle the nasty, contentious, not-yet-dealt-with things that have happened in history? Things like the residential schools? Hanging Riel? The Chinese head tax? The Japanese deportation?

Questions like these flare up around the world. Is there restitution to be made for American slavery, for South African apartheid, the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust? Between disabling guilt and callous disregard, where do we place ourselves? Are there ways to make redress, or is there a case for putting an "in the past" label on these issues, and "getting on" with our lives?

Recently I've been reading about an issue not much dealt with in Canadian history—and the claim for redress that comes out of it. In the First World War, Canada opened internment camps across the country: at Fort Henry in Kingston and the Citadel in Halifax, at Spirit Lake in far northern Quebec, and even inside Banff National Park. We filled them mostly with young Ukrainian men whose crime seems mainly to have been poor and foreign in wartime. We set them to hard labour for a token wage. We even shot a few who tried to run away.

Two recent books, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War* by Bohdan S. Kordan and *In Fear of the Barbed Wire Fence* by Lubomyr Luciuk, bring home the hardships these five thousand First World War Ukrainian internees suffered. They illustrate their powerful, accusing narratives with disturbing photographs and sad, fearful letters and petitions from the internees. Canada pleaded for immigration from all over Europe, they point out. Then we flung the immigrants behind barbed wire, where their coerced labour helped develop the national parks that became a symbol of Canadian national pride.

Lubomyr Luciuk in particular wants something done about what Canada did in 1914–18. A professor in Kingston, Luciuk is also an activist with the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association and a leader among those demanding that the government of Canada apologize, commemorate the internment camps, and make financial restitution. Luciuk believes Ukrainian Canadians were singled out as an ethnic minority, and he urges that "a time for atonement has come." In a preface to *In Fear of the Barbed Wire Fence*, his legal advisor argues that the Ukrainians have exactly the same right to redress as Japanese Canadians, to whom Canada paid compensation ten years ago.

Ukrainian work party from the Otter Internment Camp, Yoho National Park, B.C., 1916.

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The power and pathos of Luciuk's documents is undeniable. But as I read, I found myself hedging. Among the hundreds of thousands of Canadians of Ukrainian origin, some 120,000 of whom were not yet Canadian citizens in 1914, only about 5,000 were ever interned. They came under surveillance individually, it appears, not for being Ukrainian, but for being adult males of military age who were citizens of a state at war with Canada (actually, Austria-Hungary, which controlled Ukraine at the time). Many were interned mostly for being destitute and unemployable in a time of fear and hostility against foreigners. And the vast majority were released if they could support themselves and made a commitment not to threaten Canadian security.

I began to think there was a case for distinguishing that, grim as it was for those who laboured behind barbed wire, from the 1942 internment of Canada's Japanese. Then the whole western Canadian population of Japanese origin—men, women, and children—was rounded up, forcibly removed hundreds of miles inland from the coast, and had all its property sold off to profiteers to pay the cost of the operation.

Some historians who might place themselves among the victimized

communities have begun to raise some of these vexed issues in the history of wartime internments. In *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, Franca Iacovetta, Frances Swyripa, Roberto Perin and others point out that the Second World War internments of Italian-Canadians were primarily directed at Fascist sympathizers, and the First World War Ukrainian internments, while even more foolish and arbitrary, were indeed driven by concern over the loyalty of adult male citizens of a foreign power.

These historians, mostly of a critical and sometimes left-wing perspective, stress that they do not intend to be apologists for state repression. What they argue for is the complexity of history. The state in wartime, they suggest, is obliged to protect the security of its citizens. They will not erase the abuses and excesses that occurred in both internment programs. But not everything stern and arbitrary that a state does in wartime is necessarily an ethnic cleansing.

These works and the debates they launched sent me back to Erna Paris's prize-winning book *Long Shadows: Truth, Lies and History*. In it, the Toronto writer reports on her worldwide search for the ways Germans, Japanese, Serbians, South Africans, and other nations confront memory, accountability, and restitution for horrors in their past. At the end of a long book, she concludes "for the sake of social harmony, responsible citizens are often expected to put away the past. ... But seen through a long lens, peacemaking founded on forgetting appears to have a limited lifespan."

Everywhere, Paris finds, the worst solution is the attempt to forget or to deny. There lies the great value of works like Luciuk's and Kordan's, and of *Enemies Within* as well. The debate itself is more valuable than any official attempt to wrap it up in some formal verdict. Despite their differing perspectives, these works all call on us to remember difficult times, to confront them unflinchingly, and to ponder the lessons of those histories.

This matters particularly in the spring of 2003. Because we are in a kind of war. This country and its allies are presently investigating and restricting the liberties of a lot of men and women of Arabic or Middle Eastern descent. As before, the Canadian state has an obligation to protect the security of the nation. Unhappy things will befall people who come under suspicion. But war gives Canadians no right to persecute people for their ethnic origin, any more than it did in 1914 or 1939. We've been here before, and it's not a situation where either easy excuses or easy condemnation will do much good.

In Fear of the Barbed Wire Fence: Canada's First National Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914–1920 by Lubomyr Luciuk. Kashtan Press, 2001.

Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada During the Great War by Bohdan S. Kordan. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.

Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad, edited by Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe. University of Toronto Press, 2000.

Long Shadows: Truth, Lies and History by Erna Paris. Knopf Canada, 2000.

Silver Threads by Marsha Skrypuch. Viking Penguin Canada, 1996 (a children's novel set amid the First World War internment).

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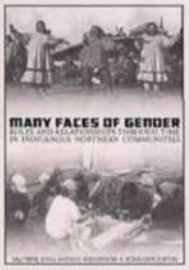

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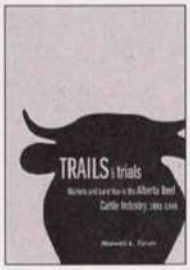

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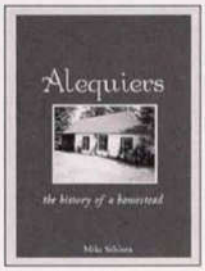

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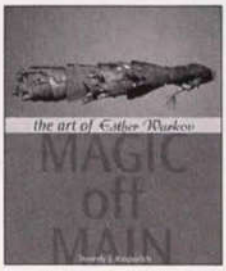

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Album

Walter Haldorson, who submitted this photograph to the *Beaver*, is the son of Charley Haldorson. He lives in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Garage In 1919, Charley Haldorson and the Swenson brothers, Sevrin and Ed, opened the Fire Proof Garage in Birch Hills, Saskatchewan. They sold and serviced Cockshutt and Ford products, and, as a sideline, ran a taxi service with a Model T Ford, which was used regularly by RCMP officers arriving by train from nearby Prince Albert to investigate people making and selling home brew. By 1921, however, when it became clear that a garage couldn't support three families, Sevrin sold his share to go farming. Charley (in doorway) followed him into farming the next year. Ed (second from left) ran the business until 1927; then he, too, went farming.

Here's the kicker: On a bitterly cold December day in the mid-1930s, the Fire Proof Garage burned to the ground. It was the Depression. The citizens of Birch Hills needed a laugh. ◘

Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in our country's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied at your local photo shop (please don't send priceless originals) and send it to: Album, c/o *The Beaver*, #478–167 Lombard Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0T6. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your copy returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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HISTORY™ TELEVISION

EASTERN	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
7:00 AM	THE CANADIANS					CANADIAN HISTORY (Wed. 9 pm)	THE BEST OF CANADA
7:30 AM							
8:00 AM	HISTORY BITES						
8:30 AM	IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY					PAID PROGRAMMING	PAID PROGRAMMING
9:00 AM	CANADIAN ANTHOLOGIES						
9:30 AM							
10:00 AM	HISTORY LANDS					HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM
10:30 AM	ODYSSEYS						
11:00 AM	TURNING POINTS						
11:30 AM							
12:00 PM	TOUR OF DUTY / CHINA BEACH until May 23 / from May 26						
12:30 PM							
1:00 PM	HISTORY ON FILM					DOC SERIES (NON WAR)	WAR STORIES (Thurs. 9 pm)
1:30 PM							
2:00 PM						WESTERN MATINEE	HISTORY ON FILM
2:30 PM							
3:00 PM							
3:30 PM							
4:00 PM	HISTORY LANDS						
4:30 PM	ODYSSEYS						
5:00 PM	THE UNTOUCHABLES 1993					THE CANADIANS	WAR SERIES
5:30 PM							
6:00 PM	HISTORY BITES					STREETS OF THE WORLD	
6:30 PM	WAY WE WERE	FASHION QUEST	ODYSSEYS	SECRET WEAPONS (US)	HISTORY LANDS	GHOST TOWNS	
7:00 PM	TOUR OF DUTY / CHINA BEACH until May 23 / from May 26					BEST OF CANADA	ROYAL HOUR
7:30 PM							
8:00 PM	CANADIAN ANTHOLOGIES					THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC HOUR	DOC SERIES-NONWAR Klondike / Exposed
8:30 PM	LEGENDS OF HOCKEY	WOMEN ADVENTURERS/ SCANDAL THEN AND NOW	DISASTERS OF THE CENTURY	TIMELINES OF THE CENTURY	SEA HUNTERS		
9:00 PM	20TH CENTURY MONDAYS	ANCIENT HISTORY TUESDAYS	CANADIAN HISTORY WEDNESDAYS	HISTORY OF WAR THURSDAYS	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM
9:30 PM							
10:00 PM							
10:30 PM							
11:00 PM	12 O'CLOCK HIGH						
11:30 PM							
12:00 AM	20TH CENTURY MONDAYS	ANCIENT HISTORY TUESDAYS	CANADIAN HISTORY WEDNESDAYS	HISTORY OF WAR THURSDAYS	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM
12:30 AM							
1:00 AM							
1:30 AM							
2:00 AM	HISTORY ON FILM						
2:30 AM							
3:00 AM						THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC HOUR	DOC SERIES-NONWAR
3:30 AM							
4:00 AM						WESTERN MATINEE	ROYAL HOUR
4:30 AM							
5:00 AM	PAID PROGRAMMING						WAR SERIES
5:30 AM							
6:00 AM	THE UNTOUCHABLES 1993						CABLE IN THE CLASSROOM
6:30 AM							

Program changes may occur.